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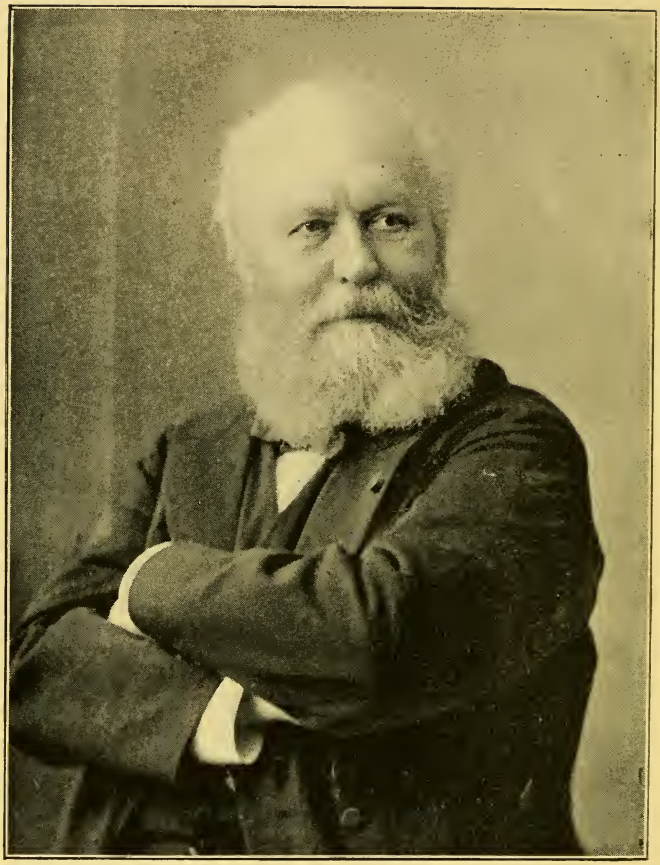

CH. GOUNOD

Frontispiece.

Masters of French Music

BY

ARTHUR HERVEY

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON
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PREFACE

The reader who turns to these pages with the idea of finding therein a large and exhaustive account of the composers mentioned, with a technical analysis of their works, will, I fear, be disappointed. My intention has been a far more modest one.

The dimensions of this volume would not have allowed me to devote that amount of space to each composer that might be considered due to his merits.

The object I have had in view has been to give an account of their lives and to draw attention to the tendencies exhibited in their works.

The French can boast a splendid musical record, particularly as regards the opera. Paris was for many years the centre towards which foreign artists were wont to gravitate. It was here that Gluck laid the seeds of his musical reforms; that Cherubini and Spontini lived and brought out their best

works; it was the influence of French taste that caused Rossini to forsake the inartistic devices of his earlier Italian operas and write "Guillaume Tell," his masterpiece; it was for Paris that Meyerbeer composed "Robert le Diable," "Les Huguenots," "Le Prophète," and "L'Africaine;" that Donizetti wrote the "Favorite," and Verdi, "Don Carlos." It was Paris that Wagner had in his mind when he composed his "Rienzi."

Then if we cast a glance at their native composers what treasures of melody, what grace, and what innate dramatic feeling do we not find in the works of Méhul, Boïeldieu, Auber, Hérold, Adam, Halévy, and others whose operas during the first half of the present century were heard all over Europe.

Of a different type to the above we meet the Titanic figure of Berlioz, whose influence has been so great over the younger generation of composers and whose orchestral innovations have borne such fruit. In the present volume I am only dealing with living composers, otherwise there are four who occupy prominent places in the records of contemporary music whose names would have been included, Bizet, Lalo, César Franck, and Léo Delibes.

Bizet, the gifted author of "Carmen," the inspired

musician who wrote "L'Arlésienne," snatched away at the very moment when his genius was beginning to meet with recognition. Who knows what he might not have done had he lived! As it is, "Carmen" is probably the most generally popular opera that has been written by a Frenchman since Gounod produced his "Faust," and Bizet was only thirty-seven years of age when he died!

Edouard Lalo, whose death occurred last year (1892), had to wait a long time before his merits received the recognition to which they were entitled. His popularity in France may be said to date from the time when his opera, "Le Roi d'Ys," was first produced at the Opéra Comique some five years ago, when the composer had reached his sixtieth year. An opera of his entitled "Fiesque," composed many years previously, was accepted by one manager after another, but some circumstance invariably occurred to prevent its being brought out. His ballet "Namouna" contains much that is both charming and original, yet it failed to captivate the public of the Paris Opéra when it was produced.

Amongst his orchestral works are to be found a fine symphony, which I remember hearing at one of the Lamoureux concerts in Paris and which ought

to be given here; two Norwegian Rhapsodies, and the "Symphonie Espagnole" for violin and orchestra. The work he will probably be best remembered by is "Le Roi d'Ys." A great admirer of Wagner, Lalo in this opera applies the master's theories in a restricted sense only, and "Le Roi d'Ys" has a greater affinity with "Tannhäuser" and "Lohengrin" than with "Tristan" or the "Meistersinger." His chamber compositions and orchestral works reveal a considerable amount of originality and knowledge of effect, allied to consistently elevated notions with regard to the æsthetics of his art. A tendency towards the employment of curious rhythms often imparts a peculiar "cachet" to Lalo's compositions. In all his works he exhibits a complete mastery over orchestral resources, a branch of the art in which French composers as a rule excel.

The name of César Franck is less known in England. Although a Belgian by birth, he may through his long residence in France be reckoned amongst the composers of that country. His reputation has been steadily on the increase of late, and some of his enthusiastic admirers have not scrupled to call him the "French Bach."

Perhaps we may one day have an opportunity of judging works such as "Ruth," "Rédemption" and "Les Béatitudes," which last is generally considered as his masterpiece.

Léo Delibes will be remembered chiefly through his exquisite ballet music, such as "Coppelia" and "Sylvia," full of grace, charm and refinement, never commonplace, and bearing the stamp of a distinct individuality. His operas, "Le Roi l'a dit," "Jean de Nivelle," and "Lakmé," do not show his talent off to the same advantage, albeit containing many delightful pages.

Léo Delibes' music is typically French and is full of that "esprit" so characteristic of our neighbours. A pupil of Adolphe Adam, Delibes seems to have acquired his master's lightness of touch and gift of melody, to which he was able to add a quality of distinction which the composer of "Le Postillon de Lonjumeau" did not possess.

It is, however, with the living that we are concerned, and, having paid a passing tribute to the memory of the above deceased musicians, I will now proceed with my task, once more claiming the indulgence of my readers, and begging them to bear in mind that, whatever defects may be noticeable in these imperfect

sketches, I can at least claim that they have been written in perfect good faith.

ARTHUR HERVEY.

P.S.—Among the books that I have had occasion to consult I may mention especially Mons. Adolphe Jullien's "Musiciens d'Aujourd'hui," Mons. Pagnerre's "Charles Gounod," Mlle. de Bovet's "Life of Gounod," Mons. Hugues Imbert's "Profils de Musiciens," and "Nouveaux Profils de Musiciens."

I also take this opportunity of expressing my indebtedness to my friend, Mr. Robin H. Legge, for having been instrumental in procuring for me information of a valuable nature.

A. H.

July 1893.

Note.—Since these sketches were written, the death of Charles Gounod has deprived France of one of her greatest musicians. The composer of "Faust" died on the 18th of October (1893), the anniversary of the first performance of his opera, "La Nonne Sanglante," which was produced in 1854. His loss is one that will be mourned, not by France alone, but by all other nations, and Englishmen will not forget that their country was the birthplace of the "Redemption" and "Mors et Vita."

A. H.

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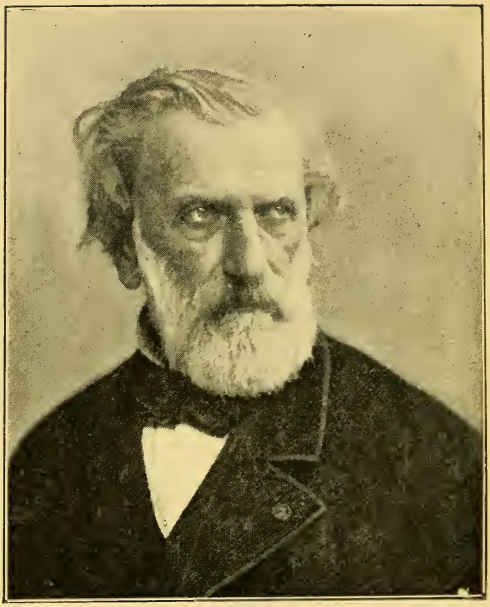


Aubrey Thomas
Constitution 24 July 1868.

AMBROISE THOMAS

It has become a trite saying that music is the youngest of the arts. The truth of this is nevertheless indisputable, and the remark is perhaps more applicable to music as represented in the "lyrical drama" than in any other form. What pleases one generation is often distasteful to the next, and a period of twenty or even ten years has sometimes been sufficient to witness a thorough evolution in the methods and general style of dramatic music.

The career of the composer whose name heads this chapter is, from this point of view, interesting to study, and a cursory glance at the state of musical affairs at the time when he emerged from the Paris Conservatoire, having won the "Grand Prix de Rome," will not be

out of place, and may help towards forming a more accurate estimate of his talent.

Every art has traversed a period of degeneration, when true æsthetics have been neglected and men of undoubted talent, or even genius, have been unable to free themselves from the shackles of a vitiated taste. This applies, perhaps, more to music than to any other art, probably for the reason that in this case the demand upon the intellect is proportionately greater, and a certain degree of culture is absolutely necessary for its due appreciation. There is a semblance of truth in the contention advanced by Rubinstein, that music is the reflex of its time, and even re-echoes the political events and general state of culture of the age. The following paradoxical opinion of the eminent Russian composer and pianist, taken from his "Conversation on Music,"* is well worth quoting *in extenso:* "I can follow musically even the events of our century. Our century begins either with 1789, the French Revolution (musi-

* Published by Messrs. Augener.

cally with Beethoven), or the year 1815 is to be looked upon as the close of the eighteenth century, disappearance of Napoleon from the political horizon, the Restoration, &c. (musically the scholastic-virtuoso period: Hummel, Moscheles, and others); flourish of modern philosophy (third period of Beethoven); the July Revolution of 1830, fall of the Legitimists, raising the son of Philippe Egalité to the throne, the Orleans dynasty, democratic and constitutional principle in the foreground, monarchical principle in the background, 1848 in sight (Berlioz); the Æolian harp of the Polish rebellion of 1831 (Chopin); romanticism generally and its victory over the pseudo-classic (Schumann); flourish of all the arts and sciences (Mendelssohn); the triumph of the bourgeoisie, in sense of material existence, a shield against all disturbing elements of politics and culture (Capellmeister music); Louis Napoleon becomes Emperor (Liszt, the virtuoso, becomes the composer of symphonies and oratorios); his reign (the operetta a branch of art); the

German-Franco war, Germany's unity, the freedom of Europe resting on ten millions of soldiers, change in all formerly accepted political principles (Wagner, his music-drama, his art principles, &c.)."

We are able with a tolerable degree of certainty to determine the period when a house was built by the style of its architecture, just as we experience no difficulty, as a rule, in discovering the date when a picture was painted through details that unmistakably reveal the epoch when the artist lived, even if the subject he may have chosen to illustrate be ever so remote. The well-known picture by Paul Veronese of the "Marriage Feast of Cana" is a case in point.

In respect to music, a similar law would appear to govern its manifestations, and special characteristics are associated with the productions of different epochs. This is made evident by the non-success that attends the composer whose genius impels him onward towards new and unknown horizons. Woe be

to the one who has the temerity to forestall his own generation. Although immortality and a tardy homage to his memory may be his reward, these will perhaps scarcely afford compensation for the trials and hardships endured whilst battling for sheer existence in this vale of tears. It is a moot consideration whether the wisest course to adopt is that followed by Hector Berlioz, or the one that has brought prosperity as well as celebrity to Ambroise Thomas; for whereas the former may result in post-mortem panegyrics, the latter procures a more immediate recompense, and may lead to the directorship of the Paris Conservatoire.

There is something inexpressibly sad in the evanescence of music, and in thinking of the comparatively small number of compositions destined to survive their age. In this respect music is at a decided disadvantage in comparison with the sister arts; the fact of the former being essentially creative possibly accounting in some measure for this. At any rate, whereas masterpieces of classic art, such as "The

Dying Gladiator" and the "Apollo Belvedere" remain unrivalled and do not betray a vestige of their antiquity, much of the music composed fifty years ago has become so hopelessly old-fashioned that it can scarcely be listened to with patience.

Is it that in this special case familiarity breeds a larger dose of contempt than usual? The fact has been proved over and over again, that compositions that seem absolutely incomprehensible to one generation, are accepted as comparatively simple by the next; whereas those that have caught on with the public at once very soon lose their hold.

The great test of an art work, as such, is its truth of expression. The moment this is wanting, its value diminishes, and it is powerless to survive the caprice of fashion.

Thus we find that those works into which composers have poured their innermost feelings, untrammelled by any desire to purchase an ephemeral popularity at the cost of the sacrifice of principle, are those that have remained.

This is so much the case with stage works that it is necessary to state it definitely before proceeding any further.

For years the operatic composer was almost entirely at the mercy of the singer, and it has required many efforts on the part of great artists to shake off the load, the final emancipation being effected through the agency of one whose genius towers far above that of his contemporaries, and whose influence upon music has been as widespread as it has been beneficial. Need I say that I allude to Richard Wagner?

The spirit of routine, so engrained in the human mind, has also much to account for in preventing the development of music as represented in the opera. It is far from my desire to say anything in disparagement of a form of art such as the "opéra comique," a *genre* that has been illustrated with so conspicuous a degree of success by composers such as Grétry, Monsigny, Dalayrac, Nicolo, Boïeldieu, Hérold, and Auber. At the same time, it must be admitted that the ideal aimed

at by modern French musicians is altogether a higher one. The "lyrical drama" has usurped the place of the old "opéra comique," and those composers whose inability or disinclination have kept them from following the prevalent movement, have perforce drifted into that mongrel species of art known as the "opérette." From an æsthetic point of view the change is emphatically for the better, as the "opéra comique," corresponding to the German "Singspiel," and to our "ballad opera," and consisting of an amalgam of speech and song, being neither fish, flesh, nor fowl, is utterly inconsistent with logic.

That there is still, however, a place for works coming under the denomination of a modernised form of "opéra comique," as distinct from the "opérette," without pretensions of too lofty an order, is evidenced by the delightful works of the late Léo Delibes, "Le Roi l'a dit," "Jean de Nivelle," and "Lakmé"; and more recently by Mons. Chabrier's "Le Roi Malgrè Lui" and Mons. Messager's "La Basoche."

In the year 1832, when Ambroise Thomas had completed his twenty-first birthday, the Rossini fever was at its height. Beethoven was comparatively little known in France, and those amongst his symphonies that had been brought to a hearing had excited more wonder than admiration.

"Il ne faut pas faire de la musique comme celle-là," Lesueur had said to Berlioz after having listened to the C Minor Symphony; "Soyez tranquille, cher maître, on n'en fera pas beaucoup," had been the answer vouchsafed by the future author of "La Damnation de Faust." In the meanwhile Boïeldieu never lost the opportunity of playing through Rossini's operas to his pupils, and descanting upon their merits. It is indeed difficult to account for the extraordinary influence exercised by Rossini over his contemporaries. That his "facile" melodies should have proved agreeable to the general public, and his florid ornamentations grateful to the singers, "passe encore." But that an entire generation of composers

should have been so fascinated by the sham glitter of his brilliant though shallow compositions as to follow his methods in so faithful a manner, is incomprehensible. It is eminently to the credit of French taste that "Guillaume Tell," his only really great work of serious import, should have been written for the Paris Grand Opéra.

Entirely devoid of artistic conscience or of any of those lofty aspirations towards the ideal that stamp the true artist, be his name Bach or Beethoven, Schubert or Schumann, Berlioz or Wagner, Rossini deliberately squandered his genius. Success seems to have been his only object, and this once acquired he was content to idle away the remainder of a long existence, sublimely unconscious of the great musical upheaval that was being accomplished by genuine workers in the cause of art.

What can we think of a composer who could employ the same overture to precede operas so widely different in regard to their subject-matter as "Elisabetta, Regina d'Inghilterra" and "Il

Barbiere"? What of the musician who thought that a brilliant martial strain was the right musical interpretation of the sublime and poignant words expressive of Mary at the foot of the Cross? "Cujus animam gementem, contristantem et dolentem"; words of indescribable sadness and depth; a mother mourning her Divine Son; a theme unexampled in point of pathos and emotion, set to a melody that would be in its proper place in some pageant descriptive of the triumphal entry of a conqueror into a city!

What, again, of the composer who could prefix a tragedy like "Othello" with an overture fit for an "opéra bouffe?" And what would be said nowadays of the musician who, finding himself short of an idea, pilfered that of another composer, as Rossini did in "Il Barbiere," the trio in the last act of which being palpably taken from Haydn's "Seasons"? The greater a man's genius—and no one would dream of denying this attribute to Rossini—the greater his responsibility. *Noblesse oblige.* In order

that I may not be accused of formulating too harsh a judgment upon the Italian master, I will quote the following words of Blaze de Bury, his friend and admirer: "Avec du génie et les circonstances, on fait les Rossini; pour être Mozart ou Raphaël, Michel Ange ou Beethoven, il faut avoir quelque chose de plus: des principes."

What has been termed the "golden epoch" of the "grand opéra" was at this time at its *apogee*, and the period of ten years from 1828 to 1838 witnessed the production upon the same boards of Auber's "La Muette de Portici," known here as "Masaniello," Rossini's "Guillaume Tell," Halévy's "La Juive," and Meyerbeer's "Robert le Diable" and "Les Huguenots."

It has been too much the fashion in recent years to decry the works of Meyerbeer, and to lay stress upon their shortcomings whilst giving but a grudging half-hearted acknowledgment to the many undeniable beauties that pervade them. Against so unjust a verdict I desire

emphatically to protest, for however much Meyerbeer may have sacrificed for the sake of effect, there can be no doubt that he contributed in a large measure towards raising the operatic standard, then at a very low level.

If we find the rich crop of wheat not devoid of chaff, we must at any rate admit that the former is of excellent quality. To be the author of "Les Huguenots," the fourth act of "Le Prophète," and the music to "Struensee," not to speak of many another dramatic masterpiece, is in itself a sufficient title to rank amongst the greatest musicians of the age.

It would occupy too much space were I to enter further into a question which I may in the course of this volume have occasion to allude to again. I will therefore terminate these preliminary observations by stating the position occupied by the three great emancipators of dramatic and instrumental music—Berlioz, Liszt, and Wagner—at the time I mention, *circa* 1832.*

* Berlioz was born in 1803, Liszt in 1811, and Wagner in 1813.

The first was endeavouring to obtain a hearing for works that were condemned as incoherent and unintelligible, the second had achieved high fame as a pianist, and the third was qualifying for the humble position of "Capellmeister" in a German provincial town. The charge of incoherence was destined to cling to Berlioz even unto the end, whilst the colossal reputation of Liszt as an executant for a long while caused his labours as a creative musician to be underrated. As to Wagner, the number of misrepresentations that he had to live through are too numerous and too well known to mention.

Time, however, sets all things right, and the three masters are little by little gaining the position in public estimation to which they are entitled.

Ambroise Thomas was born at Metz on the 5th of August 1811, the same year as Liszt. He entered the Paris Conservatoire, of which institution he is at the time I am writing the honoured director, in 1828, and studied there

under Zimmerman, Dourlen, and Lesueur;* also receiving instructions from Kalkbrenner,† and Barbereau.‡ The vein of sentiment which in later years was to be so prominent a feature in his compositions must have been noticeable even at that time, for it is said that his master Lesueur, on being told that the future author of "Mignon" was seventh in the class, remarked: "Thomas est vraiment ma note sensible." (The seventh note of the scale, or what we in England call the leading note, is known in French as "la note sensible.") Having won the "Prix de Rome" in 1832, for a cantata entitled "Herman et Ketty," Ambroise Thomas repaired to Italy, where he spent the following three years according to the usual custom.

It must have been about this time that he composed the trio and "Caprices en forme de

* Lesueur, born 1763, died 1837; composer of "Les Bardes," and other operas.

† Kalkbrenner, born 1788, died 1849; celebrated pianist.

‡ Barbereau, born 1799, died 1879.

Valses" for piano, marked respectively Opus 2 and 4, which were appreciated in the following terms by Schumann.*

"We come to an extremely pleasant composition, a 'salon trio,' during which it is possible to look around without completely losing the musical thread; neither heavy nor light, neither deep nor superficial, not classical, not romantic, but always euphonious and in certain parts full of beautiful melody; for instance, in the soft leading motive of the first movement, which, however, loses a great deal of its charm when it reappears in the major, and even sounds commonplace," etc.

"The 'Caprices' of Thomas move in a higher circle than Wenzel's 'Adieu de St. Petersbourg,' but, notwithstanding the evident application and the great amount of talent evinced, are nothing more nor less than higher-class Wenzel; 'lederne' German thoughts translated into the French language, so pleasant that one must needs beware of them, and so pretentious that

* "Gesammelte Schriften."

one could well get vexed with them. Occasionally the composer wanders into mystic harmonies, but, soon frightened at his own temerity, returns to his natural mode of expression, to what he possesses and is able to give. But what do I expect? The 'Caprices' are pretty, sound well," etc.

During his sojourn in the eternal city, Thomas made himself popular with all who came across him, and was alluded to by Ingres, the celebrated painter, at that time head of the school whither were sent the successful young artists and musicians who had won the "Prix de Rome," as "l'excellent jeune homme, le bon Thomas."

The operatic career of the composer of "Mignon" dates from the year 1837, his first venture being a one-act comic opera entitled "La Double Echelle," produced at the Opéra Comique. This was succeeded the following year by "Le Perruquier de la Régence," three acts, at the same theatre; and in 1839 by "La Gipsy," a ballet at the Opéra, in collaboration

with Benoist, and "Le Panier Fleuri," at the Opéra Comique.

The prolific nature of the composer's talent was further illustrated by the production in quick succession of "Carline" (1840), "Le Comte de Carmagnole" (1841), "Le Guerillero" (1842), and "Angélique et Médor" (1843), none of which obtained any appreciable success. It was otherwise with "Mina," a three-act comic opera, produced at the Opéra Comique in 1843, which enjoyed a certain vogue at the time, but has not survived.

The first permanent success achieved by Thomas was with "Le Caïd," a light opera given in 1849, which rapidly became popular, and is regarded by some as the precursor of the style of *opéra bouffe* which was destined later on to achieve so great a notoriety at the hands of Offenbach and his imitators. This is scarcely a correct view to take, as the innate refinement of a nature such as that of Ambroise Thomas has little in common with the vulgarities associated with the *genre*. "Le Caïd," in which the

composer amusingly parodies the absurdities associated with the now happily obsolete Italian opera style of the period, would nowadays pass muster as a high-class *opérette*. This bright little score is full of that *esprit* of which French composers seem to possess the secret, and is wedded to an exceedingly amusing libretto. "Le Caïd" has remained popular in France, and occupies a permanent place in the *répertoire* of the Paris Opéra Comique.

Before proceeding with the composer's operatic career, it may be well to mention a phase in his existence during which he bravely performed his duties as a citizen. At the time of the political troubles of 1848, when art was forcibly relegated into the background, Ambroise Thomas donned the uniform of a *garde national*. It is related that one night, when passing under the windows of his friend and collaborator Sauvage, with whom he was at that moment working, he shouted out to him, brandishing his gun, "This is the instrument upon which I

must compose to-day; the music it produces requires no words."

Happily Thomas was able soon to revert to more pacific and profitable occupations.

The composer's next work was of a different nature, and if "Le Songe d'une Nuit d'Eté" ("A Midsummer Night's Dream"), given at the Opéra Comique in 1851, did not achieve a similar success to "Le Caïd," it possessed merit of a higher order, and is even now still occasionally performed.

This opera has nothing to do with Shakespeare's comedy, as its name might imply. Curiously enough, the immortal bard is made to figure as the hero of the piece. He is represented as a drunkard, who is rescued by Queen Elizabeth from his evil habits through a stratagem, by which he is made to see the veiled figure of a woman, when he is recovering from a drunken bout, whom he mistakes for the embodiment of his own genius, and who threatens to abandon him unless he promises to reform. It is strange that such a farrago of nonsense

should have been deemed worthy of serving as an operatic text.

"Raymond," a three-act opera, founded upon the story of the Man with the Iron Mask, followed the above work in 1851. The overture is the only number that has survived. It is a brilliant orchestral piece, somewhat in the style of Auber.

In the course of the same year Ambroise Thomas was elected a member of the Institute in the place of Spontini. It can scarcely be said that this brought him much luck, for of the five operas that he wrote within the ten succeeding years, not one has kept the stage. They need not detain us long. Their names are "La Tonelli" (1853); "La Cour de Célimène" (1855); "Psyché" (1857), a revised version of which was produced at the Opéra Comique in 1878; "Le Carnaval de Venise" (1857); and "Le Roman d'Elvire" (1860).

After these comparative failures the composer appears to have taken a much-needed rest and devoted some time to reflection, which was to

be productive of excellent results. It may safely be urged that had Thomas died at this period he would have been only entitled to rank with musicians of subordinate talent, such as Massé, Maillart, Clapisson, "e tutti quanti."

As it happens, he had not then given the full measure of his worth, and the two works destined to procure for him the European reputation he enjoys belong to his full maturity.

The following is the opinion emitted by Fétis in his "Dictionnaire des Musiciens" upon Ambroise Thomas. It must be remembered that these lines were written before the production of either "Mignon" or "Hamlet": "Talent fin, gracieux, élégant, toujours distingué, ayant l'instinct de la scène, souvent mélodiste, écrivant en maître et instrumentant de même, cet artiste n'a malheureusement pas la santé, nécessaire à l'énergie de la pensée. Il a le charme délicat et l'esprit, quelquefois il lui manque la force. Quoi qu'il en soit, M. Ambroise Thomas n'en est pas moins un des

compositeurs les plus remarquables qu'ait produits la France."

Six years after the "Roman d'Elvire," the bills of the Opéra Comique announced the first performance of "Mignon," the instantaneous success of which must have helped to console the composer for former reverses. In constructing an opera book out of Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister," the librettists, Michel Carré and Jules Barbier, showed an even greater independence of spirit than they displayed when adapting the same poet's "Faust," for they deliberately altered the original *dénouement*, and instead of ending the work with Mignon's death, they prosaically allowed her to marry the hero, with whom she is presumably supposed to live happily for ever afrerwards, possibly in order not to depart too abruptly from the conventionalities of the Opéra Comique Theatre, which has long been a match-making centre for the *bourgeoisie*.

Happily, Ambroise Thomas did not compose his "Hamlet" for the same boards, otherwise who knows but that the Prince of Denmark

would not have been made to see the error of his ways, and wed the fair Ophelia, who would thereby have been saved from going mad, and spared the trouble of mastering the vocal acrobatics that are always indulged in by operatic heroines who are bereft of reason.

The marriage festivities given in honour of Hamlet and Ophelia would have enabled Ambroise Thomas to make use of his ballet music, and every one would have been left happy and contented, except perhaps the Ghost, who is sufficiently tedious not to deserve any sympathy. It is but fair to say that the requirements of *habitués* at the Opéra Comique have considerably changed. Realism has invaded the stage, and a tragic ending is no longer the exception to the rule in works destined for this theatre.

The poetical subject of "Mignon" was well suited to the refined nature of the composer's talent, and the musical value of the work has amply justified its success. What soprano

vocalist is there who has not sung the suave cantilena, "Connais-tu le pays"?

The melodious duet between Mignon and the old harpist ("Légères Hirondelles"), the piquant little gavotte that precedes the second act, the tenor song, "Adieu, Mignon," and the brilliant overture, are amongst the most noteworthy and popular numbers of the opera.

The original interpretation of "Mignon" was of great excellence. Nothing could have been more perfect than Mme. Galli Marié's* assumption of the heroine, an actual embodiment of Ary Scheffer's well-known pictures of Mignon. I have heard many artists in this part, but none who so completely realised the character in all its details. Mme. Cabel† personified Philine, and the cast was completed by Achard (Wilhelm Meister), Couderc (Laertes), Bataille (Lothario), etc. Mme. Christine Nilsson, Mme. Minnie Hauk, and Miss van Zandt must be mentioned

* This admirable artist was later on destined to create Bizet's "Carmen."

† The original of Meyerbeer's "Dinorah.

as successful interpreters of the title *rôle*. For the Italian version, Ambroise Thomas altered the small part of Frédéric, and added a vocal arrangement of the "Entr'acte Gavotte" for the late Mme. Trebelli.

"Mignon," it may be mentioned, was the opera that was being performed on the night of the terrible fire that destroyed the Opéra Comique in 1887.

In Germany and in Austria this opera has not proved less successful than it has in France, and the following appreciation of Dr. Hanslick* may not prove uninteresting: "This opera is in no place powerfully striking, and is not the work of a richly organised, original genius. Rather does it appear to us as the work of a sensitive and refined artist showing the practical ability of a master-hand. Occasionally somewhat meagre and tawdry, akin to the vaudeville style, the

* Hanslick, Edward. Born 1825. The well-known critic and writer on music. Strongly antagonistic to Wagner and his school. Author of "Das Musikalische Schöne,' etc.

music to 'Mignon' is nevertheless mostly dramatic, spirited and graceful, not of deep, but of true, and in many instances warm feeling. Its merits and defects are particularly French, which is the reason why the first are more noticeable upon the French and the latter upon the German boards."

Having followed the example of Gounod in going to Goethe for a subject, Ambroise Thomas further trod in his illustrious *confrère's* footsteps by seeking for inspiration in the works of Shakespeare.

The opera of "Hamlet," performed for the first time in 1868, was the result. After having cruelly libelled the bard of Avon by presenting him in the character of a drunkard in his "Songe d'une Nuit d'Eté," the composer of "Mignon" was but making an *amende honorable* in doing his best to provide one of the immortal poet's greatest works with a worthy musical setting. If his attempt can scarcely be said to have been crowned with the fullest amount of success, the fault is not entirely his own, unless

he may be blamed for ignoring the fact of discretion being the better part of valour.

In endeavouring to set Shakespeare's tragedy to music Ambroise Thomas undertook an almost impossible task, and it is scarcely surprising that he should not have been absolutely successful. It would require the genius of a Wagner to give an adequate musical rendering of a work so deep and philosophical, and the Bayreuth master took care not to attempt it. Then again the peculiar nature of Ambroise Thomas's talent would appear to be absolutely unsuited to the musical interpretation of a tragedy of this description.

In judging the operatic version of "Hamlet," the fact must be borne in mind that this was written for the Paris Opera, and subjected to the exigencies of that institution, which were then far more stringent than at the present time, when Wagner has at last been admitted into the stronghold, "Lohengrin" forms part of the regular *répertoire*, and the "Walküre" draws large audiences. Amongst these exigencies must be specially mentioned the introduction of

a "ballet" towards the middle of an opera, whatever its subject. Wagner's refusal to conform to this practice had not a little to do with the failure of "Tannhäuser" at the Paris Opera in 1861.

The French are ever priding themselves upon their superiority to the rest of the world in all matters theatrical. They are nevertheless prepared to accept the most glaring inconsistencies in the matter of operatic "libretti." What, for instance, can be more incongruous than the introduction of a set ballet in a tragedy like "Hamlet"? This can almost be placed on a similar level of absurdity as the mazourka introduced by Gounod in his "Polyeucte," the action of which takes place during the time of the early Christian martyrs, or as the Scotch ballet supposed to be performed at Richmond in Saint-Saëns' "Henry VIII."

Curiously enough, the most successful portion of Ambroise Thomas's "Hamlet" turns out to be precisely this ballet act, during which all the choregraphic resources of the Paris Opera House

are called into play. In order to render justice to this work it is necessary to try and forget Shakespeare as much as possible and look upon it in a purely operatic light, when much will be found that can be unreservedly admired. The melodies are refined, and a certain poetical tinge, peculiar to the composer, pervades its pages, whilst the instrumentation is altogether of great excellence. In this last branch Ambroise Thomas has ever shown himself highly proficient, and I do not think that the following remarks of Mons. Lavoix* are unmerited: "Mons. Ambroise Thomas' orchestration is clear in its general design, *spirituel* and ingenious in its details, always interesting and full of poetical touches and of pleasant surprises."

The original interpretation of "Hamlet" had much to do with the success that attended it, and the parts of Ophelia and Hamlet found unrivalled exponents in Mme. Christine Nilsson and Mons. Faure. During the rehearsals, in order to be free from interruption, Ambroise

* "Histoire de l'Instrumentation."

Thomas transferred his abode to the Opera House itself, where he was allotted a room and kept a strict prisoner by the manager, with his piano and a goodly assortment of cigars to keep him company, for the composer of "Hamlet has always been an inveterate smoker. On the night following the first representation he was re-accorded his liberty, and being asked to make a few alterations in his score, plaintively remarked that he thought "his two months were over."

At this period Ambroise Thomas was one of the lions of the day, and a favourite at the Court of Napoleon III. His presence at the sumptuous entertainments given by the Emperor at the palace of Compiègne will be remembered by many who profited by the Imperial hospitality. Every autumn the beautiful château was used to entertain series of visitors, and all the notabilities of Paris were bidden thither as the Emperor's guests. How some of these requited his hospitality later on, when trouble had gathered about his head, is unhappily a matter of history.

Ambroise Thomas had now reached the apogee of his fame, and this was to receive its final consecration when he was called upon to succeed the veteran Auber, whose last days were embitterred, and possibly shortened, by the misfortunes that had befallen his country and disturbed his essentially pacific habits, as director of the Paris Conservatoire. This office he has continued to hold until the present day.

Since then his dramatic compositions have been few and far between, and if we except "Gille et Gillotin," a one-act trifle written many years previously, and played at the Opéra Comique in 1874, have consisted of "Françoise de Rimini," a grand opera in five acts produced at the Opéra in 1882, and "La Tempête," a ballet given at the same theatre in 1889. These works have maintained their composer's reputation, without, however, in any material way adding to it.

In examining the compositions of Ambroise Thomas it is impossible to avoid being struck by the eclecticism that pervades them all.

The composer of "Mignon" is not one of those great leaders of musical thought whose individuality becomes stamped in an indelible fashion upon the art products of their period. He has been content to follow at a respectful distance the evolution that has gradually been effected in the "lyrical drama," taking care to avoid compromising himself through a too marked disregard of recognised traditions. Hence the presence of much needless ornamentation and countless florid passages, introduced obviously in order to show off the singer's voice, that cause many of his works to appear old-fashioned.

Mons. Adolphe Jullien, the well-known critic, somewhat severely sums up the measure of the composer's talent in the following words; "The principal talent of Mons. Thomas consists in having been able to bend himself to the taste of the public by serving up in turn the style of music that suited it best. Very clever in his art, but without any originality or conviction of any sort, he began by writing *opéra comiques*

imitated from Auber, and pasticcios of Italian *opéra buffa* imitated from Rossini (such as "Carline" and "Le Caïd"); he then attempted the dramatic *opéra comique*, after the manner of Halévy, in the "Songe d'une Nuit d'Eté," and "Raymond." Later on he did not disdain to compete with Clapisson in writing "Le Carnaval de Venise" and "Psyché"; then, after a long period of inaction provoked through several repeated failures, during which the star of M. Gounod had risen on the horizon, he has attempted a new style, imitated from that of his young rival, with "Mignon" and "Hamlet." In one word, he is a musician of science and worth absolutely devoid of artistic initiative, and who turns to all the four quarters of the winds when these blow in the direction of success."

These words contain undoubted elements of truth, inasmuch as they accentuate the fact that Ambroise Thomas' talent partakes largely of an assimilative nature. Notwithstanding this, there is a certain degree of personality evident

in much of his music, discernible through an indefinable touch of melancholy that imparts a measure of distinction to many of his works, which can be sought for in vain amongst the compositions of his more immediate contemporaries.

Ambroise Thomas is one of the last offshoots of a brilliant period, showing in his later works indications of a desire to follow the new movement, without possessing sufficient strength to do more than make a feeble attempt at breaking through the bonds of operatic "routine," and ridding himself of the tyranny of the vocalist.

His work is unequal as a whole, but there is sufficient good in "Mignon" and "Hamlet" to atone for many weaknesses, and it is through these operas that his name will be handed down to posterity.

CHARLES GOUNOD

To be the composer of "Faust" is in itself sufficient to establish a claim upon the sympathy and gratitude of many thousands, as well as to enjoy the indisputable right of occupying a niche by the side of the greatest and most original composers of the century.

There are but few creative musicians whose individuality is so striking that it leaves its impress, not only upon their own productions, but upon those of their contemporaries. Their genius is reflected, their mode of thought copied, and even their mannerisms are reproduced by numberless admirers and conscious or unconscious imitators.

As it was with Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Wagner, so it has been with Gounod. A higher tribute of praise it is indeed impossible to offer.

The French master has himself defined in a few words the indebtedness of every composer to his predecessors, and the difference existing between that which is communicable and that which is individual.

"The individuality of genius consists," he says, "according to the beautiful and profound expression of an ancient writer, in saying in a new way things that are not new: 'Nove non nova.' The influence of the masters is a veritable paternity: wishing to do without them is as foolish as to expect to become a father without ever having been a son. Thus the life which is transmitted from father to son, leaves absolutely intact all that in the son constitutes personality. In this way is it with regard to the tradition of the masters, which is the transmission of life in its impersonal sense: it is this which constitutes the doctrine which the genius of St. Thomas Aquinas admirably defines as the science of life."*

* Preface to the "Choix de Chorals de Bach, annotés par Ch. Gounod." Published by Messrs. Choudens.

With some masters the personality above alluded to shows itself earlier than usual, as in the case both of Mendelssohn and Gounod.

There exists a point of contact between these two composers, so entirely dissimilar one from another in every way, which it may be well to point out. This is in respect to the nature of the influence they have exercised over other composers, which consists not so much in the adoption of any special mode of thought or art principle, but is exemplified by the servile imitation of specific mannerisms. Less far-reaching and wide-spread than that of Wagner, the influence of the above masters has also been less beneficial, for the reason that it has been more objective than subjective, and has shown itself rather in the outward details of many a composition than through its inward conception. The likeness has been more in the cut of the garment than in the material thereof. This may be accounted for by the fact that both Mendelssohn and Gounod are mannerists in the highest sense of the word, and their favourite

methods of expression being easy to imitate, have been repeated by others *ad nauseam*, until they have begun to pall; whereas Wagner has opened a vast expanse, beyond which stretches an illimitable horizon, whither the composer of the future will be able to seek fresh sources of inspiration. His art, which has been described by some as typically Teutonic, is in reality universal, because it reposes upon the immutable principles of truth and logic, and is applicable to all nations, amongst which it has imperceptibly struck root and become acclimatised, perhaps nowhere more so than in the country of the composer with whom I am now dealing.

Two elements have in their turn exercised their sway over Gounod, and both have helped to impart, either separately or jointly, to his music certain of those characteristics familiar to all who have studied his works—religion and love. The mysticism and sensuous tenderness that pervade his compositions, whether sacred or secular, are evidently the reflex of a mind

imbued with lofty aspirations, swayed at one moment by worldly tendencies, but returning with renewed intensity towards the pursuit of the ideal. Something of the same spirit may be discerned in the musical personality of another great artist, and both Liszt and Gounod exhibit in their widely different works the dual ascendancy of divine and human love.

"Das Ewig Weibliche zieht uns hinan," the words with which Goethe terminates the second part of his "Faust," are singularly applicable to the composer whose greatest work is founded upon the immortal poet's tragedy, and who has been especially successful in his treatment of the sentimental portions thereof.

The sensuous nature of his music is noticeable even in his religious compositions, of which it does not constitute the least charm.

The future composer of "Faust" was born in Paris on the 17th of June 1818.

From his earliest age he displayed exceptional musical aptitudes, and showed signs of an undoubted vocation for the career in which he was

destined so conspicuously to shine. In her "Life of Gounod" Mdlle. de Bovet relates the following anecdotes of his childhood: "At the age of two, in the gardens of Passy, where he was taken for exercise, he would say, 'That dog barks in Sol,' and the neighbours used to call him *Le petit musicien*. He likes to repeat what he said one day in that far distant childhood. He had been listening to the different cries of the street vendors, 'Oh!' he exclaimed suddenly, 'that woman cries out a Do that weeps.' The two notes with which she hawked her carrots and cabbages actually formed the minor third—C, E flat. The baby, scarcely out of his leading-strings, already felt the mournful character of this combination."

When about seven years of age he was taken to hear Weber's "Freischütz," or rather the mutilated version of this masterpiece by Castil-Blaze known under the name of "Robin des Bois." The impression produced upon his youthful mind by Weber's beautiful melodies appears to have been very great. A few years later, when

a schoolboy, he heard Rossini's "Otello" interpreted by Malibran and Rubini, and the Italian "maestro's" florid strains seem to have struck him in an equal degree. His enthusiasm, however, reached its highest pitch when he became acquainted with "Don Giovanni." He has ever since been an ardent devotee at the shrine of Mozart, and of late years his admiration for the master's music seems, if anything, to have increased.

Having had the misfortune to lose his father at an early age, he was brought up under the care of his mother. His first studies in composition were pursued under Reicha, one of the most celebrated theorists of the time; and having completed his general education at the college of St. Louis, he entered the classes of the Conservatoire in 1836, receiving instruction in counterpoint from Halévy, and in composition from Lesueur. In 1839 he obtained the "Grand prix de Rome," and soon afterwards left for Italy. During his sojourn in Rome Gounod devoted himself largely to the study of religious

music, and spent a great portion of his time in perusing the works of Palestrina and Bach.

Whilst residing at the famous Villa Médicis he made the acquaintance of Fanny Hensel, the sister of Mendelssohn, in whose correspondence may be found several interesting details concerning the future composer of "Faust."

In a letter dated April 23, 1840, she writes: "Gounod has a passion for music; it is a pleasure to have such a listener. My little Venetian air delights him; he has also a predilection for the Romance in B Minor composed here at Rome, for the duet of Felix, his 'Capriccio' in A minor, and especially for the concerto of Bach, which he has made me play more than ten times over." Later on, in another letter, she writes as follows: "On Saturday evening I played to my guests, and performed, amongst other things, the Concerto of Bach; although they know it by heart, their enthusiasm goes 'crescendo.' They pressed and kissed my hands, especially Gounod, who is extraordinarily expansive; he always finds himself short

of expressions when he wishes to convey to me the influence I exercise over him, and how happy my presence makes him. Our two Frenchmen form a perfect contrast: Bousquet's nature is calm and correct, Gounod's is passionate and romantic to excess. Our German music produces upon him the effect of a bomb bursting inside a house."

In June 1840 Fanny Hensel and her husband left for Naples. The following extract from a letter is interesting, as showing to what extent, even at that early period, Gounod had become imbued with religious ideas: "Bousquet confided to us on the way his fears concerning the religious exaltation of Gounod since he had come under the ascendancy of the Père Lacordaire . . . . whose eloquence had already during the previous winter grouped around him a number of young men. Gounod, whose character is weak and whose nature is impressionable, was at once gained over by Lacordaire's stirring words; he has just become a member of the association entitled 'John the

Evangelist,' exclusively composed of young artists who pursue the regeneration of humanity through the means of art. The association contains a large number of young men belonging to the best Roman families; several amongst these have abandoned their career in order to enter into holy orders. Bousquet's impression is that Gounod is also on the point of exchanging music for the priest's garb."

In 1843 we find Gounod in Vienna, where a "Requiem" of his composition attracted some attention. On his return to Paris he vainly endeavoured to find a publisher for some songs he had composed while at Rome. When we hear that these included "Le Vallon," "Le Soir," "Jésus de Nazareth," and "Le Printemps" —that is to say, some of the most beautiful inspirations that have emanated from his brain—it becomes difficult to account for the obtuseness of the publishers.

Discouraged in this quarter, Gounod devoted his attention once more to religious music, and accepted the post of organist to the chapel of

the "Missions Etrangères." He even entertained the idea of entering into holy orders. Happily this was not to be. The name of Gounod was becoming known in musical circles, and through the influence of Mme. Viardot, the celebrated singer, sister of Malibran, the young composer was commissioned to write the music of an opera to a book by Emile Augier,* for the "Académie Nationale." This, his first contribution to the lyric stage, was "Sapho," which was brought out in 1851, without, however, achieving much more than a *succès d'estime.* It was revived in a curtailed form seven years later, and finally, remodelled and enlarged, was reproduced in 1884. Notwithstanding its failure to attract the public, "Sapho" commanded the approbation of many competent judges, amongst whom we find no less a musician than Berlioz, who thus expressed himself upon the composer's merits: "M. Gounod is a young musician en-

* Augier, Emile. Celebrated dramatist. Author of "L'Aventurière," "Le Mariage d'Olympe," "Lions et Renards," etc.

dowed with precious qualities, whose tendencies are noble and elevated, and whom one should encourage and honour, all the more so as our musical epoch is so corrupt."

"Sapho" is by no means the worst opera Gounod has composed, though unequal as a whole. The original version remains the best.

The year after the production of "Sapho" Gounod married a daughter of Zimmermann,* a well-known musician and professor.

His next venture was at the Théâtre Français, for which he wrote incidental music to "Ulysse," a tragedy by Ponsard. A detail to note is that the orchestra was conducted by Offenbach. Although the music to this was universally praised, it did not suffice to save the piece from dire failure. "La Nonne Sanglante," a five-act opera, founded upon a novel by Monk Lewis, produced in 1854, was even less successful than "Sapho." At the same time, the press was sufficiently favourable, and Gounod's reputation, though awaiting its final consecration, was at

* Zimmermann, born 1775, died 1853.

any rate on the increase. It is as well to mention here the success achieved in London of some religious compositions of Gounod's at a concert given in 1851, which called forth an enthusiastic article in the *Athenæum*.

The year 1855 witnessed the production of one of the master's most individual works, the "Messe de Ste. Cécile," the popularity of which has remained unabated on both sides of the Channel, and which furnishes perhaps the most typical example of his genius in this particular line. Mons. Pagnerre, Gounod's biographer, very rightly considers this as occupying the same position in regard to his religious as "Faust" does to his dramatic works.

For years Gounod had cherished the desire of setting Goethe's "Faust" to music, and in 1855 he mentioned the subject to the librettists Michel Carré and Jules Barbier, who immediately set to work and provided the required text. Circumstances, however, combined to prevent him from completing his work, and Mons. Carvalho, then director of the Théâtre

Lyrique, having suggested something of a lighter description, Gounod interrupted his labours, and in five months completed the score of "Le Médecin Malgré Lui," an operatic version of Molière's comedy, which was performed for the first time on January 15, 1858. This little opera is a perfect gem of delicate fancy and refined humour. It affords a proof of what can be achieved with limited means by a true artist, and how burlesque situations are susceptible of being treated without a suspicion of vulgarity or triviality. Berlioz well defined its true worth when he wrote: "Everything in this comic opera is pretty, piquant, fresh, spontaneous; there is not a note too much nor a note too little." It has frequently been performed in England under the title of "The Mock Doctor."

We now approach the culminating point in the composer's career. The score of "Faust" was almost finished in October 1857, and Gounod was said to be at work upon a grand opera entitled "Ivan the Terrible," which was never

completed, or at all events never played. The composer utilised several portions thereof in other operas: the celebrated soldier's march in "Faust" was originally composed for the above work. "Faust" was first performed at the Théâtre Lyrique on the 19th of March 1859, with the following cast: Faust, Barbot; Mephistophéles, Balanqué; Valentin, Reynald; Siebel, Mdlle. Faivre; Marguerite, Mme. Carvalho. It was transferred to the Grand Opéra in 1869, with certain alterations, including new ballet music for the fifth act, when it was interpreted by Colin, a young tenor of great talent and promise, who was destined to die prematurely not long after; Faure, unsurpassed as Mephistophéles; Devoyod, Mdlle. Mauduit, and Mme. Nilsson, the best of Marguerites.

The success of "Faust" did not for some time assume anything like the proportions it was destined to attain later on, and the following extracts from some of the criticisms of the day may not be uninteresting. Berlioz was on the whole distinctly favourable to his young

rival's work, and his appreciation, coming from one who had himself sought for inspiration from the same source, acquires thereby additional importance. According to him, the most remarkable portion of the score is the monologue of Marguerite at her window, which closes the third act. In this it is probable that many will now agree.

Scudo,* the once famous critic of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, was less favourable than Berlioz, although he admitted the work to be thoroughly distinguished; "but," he added, "the musician has not seized the vast conception of the German poet; he has not sufficiently succeeded in appropriating unto himself the epic force of Goethe, to render any new attempt impossible." In this, Scudo was perhaps not altogether wrong. As, however, he always showed himself the uncompromising opponent of Berlioz, Wagner, and the newer school of musical thought, his judgment loses some of its weight, and it is not surprising that he should

* Scudo, P. Born 1806. Died 1864.

have pronounced the soldier's march to be a masterpiece, whilst failing to recognise the beauty of the garden scene.

Strangely enough, neither Berlioz nor Scudo, judging the work from such different standpoints, were in any way impressed by the musical beauties or dramatic force of the prison scene. Jouvin, the critic of the *Figaro*, whilst praising the second and fourth acts, thought the third monotonous and lengthy. On the other hand, the critic of the *Illustration* considered this as the finest. Scudo having died in 1864, he was succeeded on the *Revue des Deux Mondes* by Blaze de Bury, who proved even more hostile to Gounod than his predecessor.

"Faust" was first performed in London under Col. Mapleson's *régime*, in 1864, with the following cast: Mme. Titiens, Marguerite; Mme. Trebelli, Siebel; Giuglini, Faust; Gassier, Mephistopheles; Santley, Valentine. Signor Arditi was the conductor.

Later on, during the same season, it was given at Covent Garden and interpreted as

follows: Mme. Miolan-Carvalho, Marguerite; Mme. Nantier Didier, Siebel; Tamberlik, Faust; Faure, Mephistopheles; Graziani, Valentine.

Since then, the number of singers who have appeared in this unique work has been very great. There probably does not exist a *prima donna* who has not enacted the part of Marguerite; and "Faust" has usurped the place formerly occupied by "La Sonnambula" as the *débutante's* opera.

In his amusing Memoirs, Colonel Mapleson gives an entertaining account of the production of "Faust" in London.

Finding that there appeared to be a lack of public interest in the new work, discernible through the fact that only £30 worth of seats had been disposed of for the first night, he adopted the bold and singular course of distributing the tickets for the first three performances far and wide, and giving out that the house was sold out. He then put an advertisement in the *Times*, stating that, "in consequence

of a death in the family, two stalls for the first representation of 'Faust,' the opera that had excited so much interest that all places for the first three representations had been bought up, could be had at 25*s.* each." The success of this stratagem appears to have been complete. Public curiosity was aroused, and the triumphant career of "Faust" in this country was begun.

The success "Faust" has achieved all the world over is probably unprecedented in operatic annals.

Gounod is said to have got only £40 for the English rights, and he was deemed lucky to get even that.

It would appear to be an impossibility for a composer to succeed in pleasing every one, and although perhaps "Faust" possesses this gift as much as any other operatic work, yet it is not surprising that it should have been criticised adversely from many varied points of view. That it should have proved distasteful to Wagner is but natural, considering the fact that the "libretto" must have seemed to the German

master a desecration of Goethe's poem, even as much as the book of "Guillaume Tell" was a parody of Schiller's play.

Amongst the most singular appreciations of "Faust" is that emitted by Blaze de Bury, who qualifies it as an "Italian" opera!

As a contrast to this, several others have commented upon the composer's German tendencies, and the names of Mendelssohn and Schumann have been freely mentioned as furnishing the source of his inspiration. In point of fact, "Faust" is neither German nor Italian, but French, essentially French in its melody, essentially French in its harmony. The few unmistakable reminiscences of Mendelssohn do not detract from this any more than does the undoubted influence in many places of Meyerbeer. Of Schumann I can find but few if any traces. On the other hand, the work bears the stamp throughout of Gounod's own individuality. It is not an occasional reminiscence or a passing thought that suffices to class a work as belonging to any special school, but rather its general

characteristics. Those who want a typical German Faust must go to Schumann, whilst those who prefer Goethe as seen through Italian spectacles can apply to Boïto. As regards the essentially Gallic interpretations of Berlioz and Gounod there can be no question.

Probably no legend has ever been turned to such account by poet, dramatist, and musician as that of "Faust." The fascination of the story, whether looked at in its philosophical or purely romantic aspect has proved irresistible to many generations. The original Faust appears to be a mythical personage, who in some form or another has figured in the folk-lore of all nations, and is not to be confounded with Faust, or Fust, the printer. An individual of this name is mentioned by Melancthon in his "Table Talk" as having been a professor of magic at Cracow, and a great traveller, who had startled the inhabitants of Venice by flying through the air. The Reformer pleasantly alludes to this person as "Turpissima bestia et cloaca multorum diabolorum." The existence of this Faust at Cracow

is further corroborated by Wierns in 1588, a year later than the publication of the earliest version of the Faust legend by Spiess. It is upon this last that Marlowe founded his "Dr. Faustus," which was brought out in the following year. The long narrative of the story by Widman appeared in 1599. In all these versions the character of Marguerite is absent. It was reserved for Goethe to evolve this beautiful conception from his brain.*

Since the appearance of the great German poet's masterwork, the subject, as treated by him, has been utilised in various manners by numberless musicians. It would perhaps not be uninteresting to cast a glance at some of these. The following composers had preceded Gounod in making use of "Faust" as an opera text: Lickl (1815), Strauss (1814), Spohr (1814), Seyfried (1820), Béancourt (1827), Sir Henry Bishop (1825), Lindpaintner (1831), Mdlle.

* The above details are taken from "The Lyrical Drama," by H. Sutherland Edwards. (W. H. Allen & Co.)

Bertin (1831), Rietz (1837), and Gordigiani (1837).* What has become of all these works? *Chi lo sa?* The only one that has in any way survived is that by Spohr, extracts from which are still occasionally heard in the concert-room. Boïto's "Mefistofele" belongs of course to a subsequent period. It redounds greatly to the credit of the Italian composer that he should have succeeded in imposing a new operatic setting of Goethe's poem when this was so intimately associated in most people's minds with the music of Gounod.

Although strangely unequal, "Mefistofele" is nevertheless in many ways a highly remarkable work, particularly as marking a departure from the usual methods peculiar to Italian composers, and aiming at a higher ideal. It has born fruit. Boïto is a poet as well as a musician, and in his

* Lickl; b. 1769, d. 1843. Spohr; b. 1784, d. 1859. Seyfried; b. 1776, d. 1841. Bishop, Sir H.; b. 1786, d. 1855. Lindpaintner; b. 1791, d. 1856. Mdlle. Bertin; b. 1805, d. 1877. Rietz, J.; b. 1812, d. 1877. Gordigiani; b. 1806, d. 1860.

operatic adaptation of "Faust" he has evidently striven to depart as little as possible from Goethe's plan. This is of course commendable. Unfortunately, the result has not been altogether satisfactory, for in endeavouring to compress the two "Fausts" of Goethe into one work, the Italian composer has been compelled to make a selection from the different situations occurring in the original, and has only succeeded in presenting a succession of scenes strung together apparently without rhyme or reason. A proper sub-title for "Mefistofele" would be, "A selection of scenes from the two Fausts of Goethe, operatically treated by A. Boïto." Certainly the librettists of Gounod's opera have shown but scant regard for Goethe's intentions, but they have at any rate concocted a story with a well-regulated and dramatically logical plot. Boïto, on the other hand, in his evident desire to do justice to Goethe, has attempted too much and achieved too little. "Qui trop embrasse, mal étreint." This has been the case with Boïto. Many people have tried to discover a philoso

phical meaning, and the realisation of a quantity of abstract notions in Boïto's music, which only exist in their imagination. Perhaps the three composers who have best grasped the spirit of the wonderful poem have been Schumann, Liszt, and Wagner: the first in his "Scenes from Faust," the second in his "Faust Symphony," the third in his "Faust Overture." Gounod has been more successful in this respect than many people are inclined to allow. It is only necessary to point to the first bars of the Prelude and the commencement of the first act as a proof of this fact.

Of late years Berlioz's "Damnation de Faust" has acquired a well-deserved though tardily-bestowed popularity. It was considered by the composer as one of his best works, a judgment which has since then received a practically universal endorsement. At the same time, it is rather by reason of its own individuality than as a satisfactory interpretation of Goethe, that the above "dramatic legend" is entitled to the high rank it occupies in the esteem of musicians, and much

of the effect produced by this extraordinary composition can in a large measure be assigned to the glamour shed over it by the wonderful orchestral colouring that Berlioz knew so well how to employ, his mastery of which will probably remain his chief glory with posterity. Berlioz states that the score of his "Faust" was composed by him with an amount of facility that he rarely experienced in connection with his other works. The famous march on a Hungarian theme was written by him in one night. "The extraordinary effect," he writes, "that it produced at Pesth decided me to introduce it into the score of 'Faust;' in taking the liberty of placing my hero in Hungary at the outset of the work, and causing him to assist at the passing of a Hungarian army across the plain where he is indulging in dreamy thoughts." Berlioz excuses this liberty by stating that in composing his "Faust" he had never intended to bind himself into following the plan adopted by Goethe in his masterpiece. This specious sort of argument is all very well in its way, and

the adoption of similar methods might prove of infinite service to composers in enabling them to utilise previously-written works, and thereby save themselves trouble. Whether it is artistic or not, is another matter. If we suppose, for instance, that Berlioz had had by him a "Tarantella" and an Irish jig, he might have transported his hero alternately to Italy and to Erin, and named his work "The Travels of Faust," which at any rate would not have been open to the same objection as the original title chosen by him. Despite these casual observations and the fact that, looked at from the point of view of a satisfactory interpretation of Goethe's poem, the work falls short, Berlioz's "Faust" none the less remains one of its author's most inspired compositions; beautiful in parts, though needlessly eccentric in others; powerful, and, above all, eminently individual.

If the "Faust" of Berlioz may be ranked as one of its author's best works, the same place of honour can undoubtedly be ascribed to the "Scenes from Faust" of Schumann in the

lengthy catalogue of the master of Zwickau's compositions, and it is strange that so few opportunities should be afforded to Londoners of appreciating its beauties. The second part of this work is generally considered by musicians as being the most remarkable, but Schumann's setting of the Church scene counts amongst his finest inspirations. The overture is the weakest portion, and cannot compare with Wagner's masterly tone-poem known as "Eine Faust Ouverture," one of the most striking examples of modern orchestral music. I must not omit to mention the "Faust Symphony" of Liszt, which is also too seldom performed, probably on account of its length and extreme difficulty, also possibly owing to the uncompromising hostility entertained in certain quarters against the master's music. Although consisting of three movements—labelled respectively "Faust," "Marguerite," and "Mephistopheles," the work in question might rather come under the category of a "symphonic poem." It is constructed upon entirely uncon-

ventional lines, the themes being subjected to various transformations, after the method peculiar to Liszt. The second portion is one of the most beautiful movements in the entire range of instrumental music.

The following composers have also treated the same subject more or less successfully: Prince Radziwill, Litolff, Hugo Pierson, Zöllner, and Eduard Lassen.* The latter's incidental music is constantly given in Germany in conjunction with the drama. As this is the age of festivals, I should like to suggest to the minds of those responsible in such matters the feasibility of attempting what might be termed a "Faust" festival. This could be made to occupy the inside of a week, and would be devoted entirely to works inspired by Goethe's poem. I venture to think that the idea is susceptible of being turned to good account. Many musical treasures, the existence

* Radziwill; b. 1775, d. 1833. Litolff, Henry; b. 1819, d. 1891. Pierson, H.; b. 1815, d. 1873. Lassen, E.; b. 1830.

of which is unsuspected, would thereby come to light.

It would appear to be almost needless to attempt to give a description of the music that Gounod has wedded to Messrs. Michel Carré and Jules Barbier's operatic version of "Faust." That it is perhaps the most popular opera composed during the last fifty years is a generally recognised fact, and one that is not likely to be seriously contested, whatever restrictions may be made from different points of view concerning its merits. Since it was first produced, a new generation has sprung up, and what appeared startlingly bold thirty years ago has long ceased to be so considered. In 1859 matters were very different from what they now are. The operatic *pabulum* in England consisted of the works of Balfe and Wallace. In France, Auber was at the head of the Conservatoire; Ambroise Thomas had written neither "Mignon" nor "Hamlet"; Clapisson, Massé, Maillart, and composers of that calibre, enjoyed the confidence of the patrons of the

Opéra Comique; whilst Berlioz and Wagner were looked upon as musical iconoclasts.

In Italy, Verdi reigned supreme, the Verdi of "Il Trovatore" and "La Traviata," and nothing tended to foreshadow the astonishing transformation of style that was eventually to lead the master to compose works such as "Aïda," the "Requiem," "Otello," and "Falstaff."

Musical education has made considerable progress since those days, and the all-absorbing individuality of Wagner has exercised a sway over musical art that is far from having spent itself.

The form in which "Faust" was composed did not tend to differ in any appreciable degree from that adopted by Meyerbeer, with the exception that certain Italianisms and concessions to the vocalist were dispensed with.

Gounod's method, from which he has not since departed, seems to have been to musically delineate each phase of the drama, treating

every scene as a separate whole—that is to say, without having recourse to any connecting link or *leit motiv;* the recurrence of previously-heard melodies in the fifth act hardly coming under this category. He is satisfied to depict his characters in music that is intended to be more or less in accordance with their individuality. Herein consists the great difference that separates his works from those that are conceived after Wagnerian ideas.

The music allotted to Mephistopheles has an appropriate amount of Satanic colouring, and is invested with a certain grim humour. It has been remarked that Gounod has been less successful than Berlioz in his musical depiction of the philosophical side of Goethe's poem. This may or may not be true, but in comparing the two works it must be recollected that the composers cannot be judged from the same point of view, for whereas Berlioz was hampered by no theatrical trammels or operatic conventionalities, but was able to turn the legend to whatever account he chose, even to trans-

porting Faust to the plains of Hungary and accompanying him to the infernal regions, Gounod was to a certain extent dependent upon his librettists, who saw in Goethe's poem nothing more than a story susceptible of being turned to operatic purposes. As to what really constitutes the philosophical in music, probably no two people will agree. Music is intended to convey certain impressions which in turn cause corresponding emotions to the listener, in accordance with that which it has been the composer's intention to depict. If it fails in so doing, the fault may be ascribed either to the composer's incapacity, or to a want of sympathetic feeling on the part of the listener.

It is eminently to the credit of Gounod that he should have found the means in his "Faust" of pleasing a variety of differently constituted individuals, who probably admire his work from totally different standpoints.

To the great majority the charm of "Faust" lies in melodies such as those of the "old men's" and soldiers' choruses, the Kermesse

and well-known waltz; the more refined and sentimental will prefer the famous love duet and the prison trio; *prime donne* will incline to the jewel song, which furnishes them with the opportunity of displaying the agility of their throats; and the cultivated musician will single out parts that do not attract the same amount of attention, but are not the less noteworthy—such as the opening bars of the Prelude, the entire first act, the end of the third act, the death of Valentine, the Church scene, the commencement and end of the last act. When "Faust" was transferred from the Théâtre Lyrique to the Grand Opera in 1869, Gounod wrote additional ballet music, which, though charming enough in itself, is absolutely out of keeping with the nature of the subject, and might equally well figure in any opera of the type associated with this theatre.

"Faust" may be considered as an important landmark in French music, and from the year 1859 may be said to have sprung up an entirely new generation of composers, imbued with a

high and noble ideal, and differing in many essentials from their predecessors. Previous to this the voice of Berlioz remained that of one crying in the desert, unheeded and scoffed at. The author of the "Symphonie Fantastique" had come too soon, and, moreover, was altogether too thorough in his ideas and devoid of any spirit of compromise. The pen of the critic, which he wielded with such a conspicuous amount of success, was too often dipped in gall, and the shafts of sarcasm which he unremittingly hurled at his enemies kept their rancour alive, and mayhap did something to prevent even a moderate amount of fair criticism from being meted to his musical compositions. Although not a reformer in the same sense, Gounod nevertheless contrived, in a quieter and less obtrusive manner, to impose certain innovations without offending the prejudices of the partisans of the older style of operatic music. To us nowadays it seems difficult to realise that an opera so full of melody as "Faust" should have seemed at all unduly complicated, but so it

appears to have been thought, and the Parisians of thirty years ago concentrated their admiration upon the lighter portions, and looked askance at the rest. These same Parisians were destined two years later to show the measure of their musical aptitudes by the disgraceful manner in which they received Wagner's "Tannhaüser" on the occasion of the memorable performances of this work at the Opéra in 1861. At that period Gounod was professedly an admirer of the German master, although since then his opinions seem to have become sensibly modified. It is necessary to remember that Wagner was only known then as the author of "Tannhaüser" and "Lohengrin," and as holding certain heterodox views upon dramatic art.

After the *fiasco* of "Tannhaüser" Gounod appealed to the detractors of the master, and gave them *rendezvous* in ten years' time before the same work and the same man, when, he said, they would lift their hats to them both. It has required somewhat more than ten years for this, but the Parisians have gone even

further now than Gounod, and possibly the popularity of Wagner in Paris may eventually equal, if it does not surpass, that of the composer of "Faust."

Within a year after the production of this last work, a new opera by Gounod was brought out at the Théâtre Lyrique. "Philémon et Baucis," played for the first time on February 18th, 1860, is a graceful and delicate little score, that has remained popular in France and only recently has obtained a fair measure of success in London, where it was produced by Sir Augustus Harris at Covent Garden in 1891.

This pleasing work belongs entirely to the Opéra Comique *genre*, and consists of a number of detached pieces connected together through the means of spoken dialogue. In writing it Gounod evidently did not trouble himself about questions of operatic reform, but was content with filling in the framework provided for him, and allowing his ideas to flow naturally. There is nothing forced in this melodious little opera. Everything is pure and

limpid as crystal. Putting aside all æsthetic considerations as to the somewhat old-fashioned form in which the composer's ideas are expressed, it is impossible not to feel charmed by their refinement and delicacy.

"La Colombe," a little comic opera given at Baden in 1860, and later on at the Opéra Comique, is comparatively of little importance. A charming *entr'acte* still occasionally finds its way into concert programmes. A work of larger dimensions was "La Reine de Saba," produced on February 28th, 1862, the third opera written by Gounod for the Grand Opéra.

The music of this work is unequal, and the *libretto* devoid of interest. There are, however, certain numbers that have survived the wreck of this ill-fated score, which has been somewhat too harshly condemned. Amongst these may be mentioned the air, "Plus grand dans son obscurité" (which has remained a favourite with dramatic *prime donne*), the graceful women's chorus at the beginning of the second act, the characteristic ballet music,

and the grand march. These last two extracts have become popular, and form part of all properly constituted concert *répertoires*. At the period when this opera was produced, the peculiar disease known as "Wagnerophobia" was raging in Paris, and every composer with something new to say was gratified with the epithet Wagnerian, which was held to be a term of contumely, implying absence of melodic ideas and want of inspiration.

There is not much in the "Reine de Saba" that suggests the influence of the German master, except a passing reminiscence of "Tannhaüser," but at that time people did not look too closely into these matters. The score was both long and monotonous, it did not contain too plentiful a proportion of sops to the singers, and it was forthwith pronounced to be Wagnerian, an expression as condemnatory in its intention as its real meaning was little understood. Gounod himself laid great store upon his work, and being met a short time after its production by a musical critic at Baden, he told

him that he was travelling on account of a family bereavement. "I have lost," he said, "a woman whom I loved deeply, the Queen of Sheba."

Only those who know the amount of labour involved in the composition of a five-act opera can measure the disappointment that must accrue to its author on finding that his work has failed to satisfy that agglomeration of entities known as the public. "La Reine de Saba" was more successful in Brussels than in Paris, and was well received in Germany, where, however, it has been dethroned in favour of the far finer work by Goldmark bearing the same name. It has also been heard in London under the title of "Irene."

The opera of "Mireille," played for the first time at the Théâtre Lyrique in 1864, and introduced to the notice of the English public at Her Majesty's Theatre during the same year, is one of Gounod's most characteristic productions in the way that it illustrates the composer's qualities and defects perhaps as much

as anything he has done. The poem upon which it is founded is the "Mireio" of Frederick Mistral, the celebrated Provençal poet. It is a pastoral, and as such necessarily appealed irresistibly to a composer who is never so happy as when treating a subject of this kind.

The story is simple enough, and is thus condensed by Mons. Pagnerre, Gounod's clever biographer, to whose work I may refer those amongst my readers who seek for further information upon the composer's life: "A rich young girl, a poor young man, an ill-fated love; and death of the young girl through sunstroke."

This tragic *dénouement* was subsequently altered, and, according to the latest version of the opera, Mireille lives presumably to enjoy connubial bliss with her lover.

Gounod has been less happy in his treatment of the essentially dramatic portions of the story than in those in which the lyrical element predominates. The general colour of his score is

quite in keeping with a subject dealing with Provençale life, although it can scarcely be said that he has proved so successful in this respect as Bizet has in his music to Alphonse Daudet's "L'Arlésienne."

Notwithstanding this, there are many charming pages in "Mireille," strongly marked with the composer's individuality, suggestive of warm sunshine and southern skies. If the opera is emphatically a disappointment when considered as a whole, if it absolutely fails to carry conviction as a musical drama, if it is full of contradictions of style and concessions to the vocalist, it may at least claim to be replete with melody of a refined nature and to contain several numbers that are always heard with pleasure. The melodious duet, "Oh Magali ma bienaimée," has been one of the chief items in the *répertoire* of tenors and sopranos during the last five-and-twenty years, and has been massacred by numberless amateurs in countless drawing-rooms.

The overture is a delightfully fresh composi-

tion of a pastoral nature, and serves as a fitting prelude to the story. For some reason, best known to himself, Gounod has written two endings to this, the first of which is immeasurably superior, which is probably the reason why the second is usually played. In the first act the composer has introduced a vocal waltz of the same type as the one he was subsequently to place in the mouth of Juliet, both being evidently written for the purpose of giving Mme. Carvalho, the creatrix of these parts, the opportunity of indulging in vocal acrobatics. Such concessions to the exigencies of the singer are much to be deplored.

Amongst the most noticeable numbers in "Mireille" I would mention, in addition to those I have already singled out, the opening chorus of the first act, the "couplets" of Ourrias, so often sung in our concert rooms by Mr. Santley, the "Musette," the shepherd's song, and Mireille's air, "Heureux petit berger." This opera was originally in five acts; it was then reduced to three, and restored to five, with

certain modifications, on the occasion of its revival at the Opéra Comique in 1874.

If Gounod had not succeeded since his "Faust" in producing any work that could bear comparison with this masterpiece (however creditable in their way the operas that had followed it might be), he was destined in "Romeo and Juliet" to be more fortunate, and to wed music to Shakespeare's story, that many of his admirers have not scrupled to place upon the same level as the former work. With this estimate I am by no means disposed to agree, although I should be inclined to consider "Romeo" as occupying the second place in the list of the composer's dramatic works.

Shakespeare's wondrous tragedy had already been set to music by several composers,* amongst whom it will be sufficient to mention Dalayrac, Steibelt, Zingarelli, Vaccai, Bellini,

* Dalayrac; b. 1753, d. 1809. Steibelt; b. 1764, d. 1823. Zingarelli; b. 1752, d. 1837. Vaccai; b. 1791, d. 1849. Bellini; b. 1802, d. 1835. Marchetti; b. 1831. Marquis d'Ivry; b. 1829.

and Marchetti. An opera by the Marquis d'Ivry, entitled "Les Amants de Vérone," on the same theme, although written before the production of Gounod's work, was brought out in Paris in 1878 with Capoul as Romeo. It may be well to point out also that, by a curious coincidence, Gounod once more chose a subject that had been treated by Berlioz, whose symphony of "Romeo and Juliet" remains one of his greatest works.

In her interesting biography of Gounod, Mdlle. de Bovet makes the following apt observations: "'Faust,' as we have seen, is remarkable for its homogeneity, the happy outcome of the subordination of the fantastic to the emotional element. It is not possible to say that all the parts of 'Roméo et Juliette' are linked by so close a bond, and this could not well have been so. All Jules Barbier's cleverness could not make the plot other than a love duet, or rather a succession of love duets."

It is this fact that accounts in a measure for the tinge of monotony noticeable in this opera.

When Mons. A. Jullien very truly remarks that of all musicians Gounod is the one whose ideas, method, and style vary the least, he strikes a vulnerable point in the composer's armour. Thus the duets in "Romeo" have appeared to many people as attenuated versions of the love music in "Faust." Not that the themes in themselves bear any appreciable likeness one to another, but that the general characteristics and harmonic colouring are similar. To many this will appear an additional evidence of powerful individuality, whereas others will see in it an element of weakness. Wagner has proved that it is possible to write love duets totally distinct in conception one from the other, yet bearing the impress of the same hand, in "Lohengrin," "Die Walküre," "Tristan," and "Siegfried."

Although the love music of "Romeo" cannot compare with that of "Faust," yet there is no denying the charm that pervades it. Oversentimental and apt to cloy, it is eminently poetical and full of melody. If we miss the

note of true passion, we find in its stead a fund of tenderness. The prelude, or prologue, in which the characters are seen grouped upon the stage, is altogether happily conceived and novel in point of form. There is little in the first act that calls for much notice, with the exception of the clever song for Mercutio, "La Reine Mab," and the graceful two-voiced madrigal. The vocal waltz to which I have previously alluded is out of place in a work of this kind. The second act contains the balcony scene, and is conceived in a delicate and refined vein well adapted to the situation. The music throughout is suave and charming. There is nothing particularly noticeable in the treatment of the marriage scene in the cell of Brother Lawrence.

During the next scene we witness the famous quarrels in which Mercutio and Tybalt are killed. The influence of Meyerbeer is strongly marked here, although the music lacks the dramatic force which is so prominent in the works of the composer of the "Huguenots." The *finale* to

this, with its impassioned tenor solo, is highly effective.

Gounod is once more in his element in the fourth act, which contains the celebrated love duet, "Nuit d'Hyménée," and in the phrase "Non ce n'est pas le jour" he strikes a note of genuine inspiration.

The charming orchestral movement accompanying the sleep of Juliet and the final love duet bring us to the end of the numbers demanding special attention.

"Romeo" proved successful in France from the outset, whereas in England it failed to maintain itself in the operatic *répertoire* for a number of years, notwithstanding the appearance of Mme. Patti as Juliet. Recently it has acquired an undoubted popularity, owing possibly in part to Mons. Jean de Reszke's assumption of the principal character.

Alike to "Faust," "Romeo" has also been transferred to the *répertoire* of the Grand Opéra. It is in these two works that the essence of the master's genius would appear to be concentrated.

Gounod having been successful in his treatment of works by Molière, Goethe, and Shakespeare, now turned his attention to Corneille, whose "Polyeucte" exercised an irresistible fascination over his mind.

Several events, however, were destined to transpire before this work was to be brought to a termination.

The Franco-German war broke out, and Gounod, who was past the age to serve his country in a military capacity, took refuge in England. During his sojourn in London he composed the cantata "Gallia," inspired by the troubles that had befallen his native land. This work was written for the inaguration of the Royal Albert Hall, where it was performed for the first time on May 1st, 1871. On this occasion four composers were asked to contribute to the solemnity. Sir Arthur Sullivan represented England, Gounod France, Pinsuti Italy, and Ferdinand Hiller Germany. Gounod entitled his work a "biblical elegy." It met with success in London, and was subsequently performed in

Paris. The best portion of "Gallia" is the effective *finale* for soprano and chorus, "Jerusalem." Gounod was at that time working at his "Polyeucte," and was also engaged upon the "Redemption." Mrs. Weldon was to take the principal part in the first of these works.

Whilst in London Gounod composed a great deal. In addition to "Gallia" he wrote several choral works and a quantity of songs. Amongst these last may be mentioned such popular favourites as "Maid of Athens," "Oh that we two were maying," "There is a green hill far away," "The Worker," "The fountain mingles with the river," and the fascinating duet entitled, "Barcarolle." The "Funeral march of a Marionette" also dates from this epoch, as does the charming "Recueil" of songs entitled "Biondina," instinct with southern spirit. It may be amusing to peruse his opinion of English musical feeling, as recorded by Mdlle. de Bovet: "When one sees Englishmen attentively follow the execution of a score, as grave and solemn as if they were fulfilling an austere duty; then suddenly, as if

a spring had been touched, raise their heads and with beaming faces exclaim, 'Oh, how nice! very beautiful indeed!' and again bury themselves in their book as gravely and solemnly as before, one cannot help thinking that they are would-be rather than real musicians. They are actuated by British pride, because their artistic taste must be superior to the taste of other nations, just as their navy is more powerful and their cotton and flannel of better quality."

The opera "Polyeucte," which was terminated in London, was not brought out until October 7, 1878. Previous to this Gounod had set to music an operatic version of Alfred de Vigny's "Cinq Mars," given for the first time at the Paris Opéra Comique on April 5, 1877, which may be classed among his weakest productions. It bears manifest signs of haste. Apart from a suave "cantilena," "Nuit resplendissante," and some graceful ballet music, there is little in "Cinq Mars" that calls for notice.

Gounod was not much luckier with his "Polyeucte," over which he had devoted so

much thought and labour. This opera, which savours rather of the oratorio, was not particularly suited to the stage of the Grand Opéra, notwithstanding the introduction of a set ballet, very charming in its way, but utterly unfit for the subject. A gorgeous *mise en scène* and an admirable interpretation did not save it from failure. Out of this elaborate and unequal score it is possible to detach certain pages that are worthy of the illustrious name by which they are signed, but the work in its *ensemble* is thoroughly disappointing. Gounod seems after "Roméo" to have adopted an entirely retrograde style of composition in his operas, and to have receded with each new operatic attempt.

If "Cinq Mars" and "Polyeucte" were both destined to accentuate this fact, "Le Tribut de Zamora," given at the Grand Opéra in 1881, confirmed it without further doubt. This last work is certainly one of his least interesting operas, not so much in respect of want of ideas, as from the fact of its being constructed upon old and obsolete models. Gounod has pursued

an absolutely contrary course to that adopted by Wagner and Verdi, for whereas these masters have produced their greatest works at a comparatively advanced period of their lives, the composer of "Faust" has lost ground at each successive production. In saying this I allude especially to his operas. Mons. Adolphe Jullien, in an article on the "Tribut de Zamora," makes the following apt remarks: "Generally speaking, musicians as they advance in their career obtain renewed strength, and follow an upward course—at any rate, as long as they have not attained old age. It is even the case with certain musicians, such as Rossini and Verdi, that a revelation at a later stage of their career enables them to perceive a new ideal, which they endeavour to attain, with more or less success, according to the amount of genius they possess; even for the one who is unable to reach his aim, it is always a merit to have had it in view. There is nothing of this in M. Gounod. After the long period of rest that followed the production of his best works, from 'Faust' to

'Roméo,' he has re-entered the career with ideas absolutely modified as regards dramatic music; he has returned straight to the old type of opéra comique and opera, carefully cutting up each act into airs and recitatives, each romance or melody into short square periods, simplifying the orchestral accompaniment as much as possible, and subordinating it to the voices, which it often doubles. According to this retrograde system he has written his last operas, 'Cinq Mars,' 'Polyeucte,' and 'Le Tribut de Zamora,' whilst the young French musicians taking his earlier works as their starting-point, were endeavouring to add to the refinement of his orchestration, and to treat each act as a vocal and orchestral symphony. There can be no doubt that it is to this that the dramatic music of the present day tends, and it is all the more strange to see M. Gounod going against this irresistible movement that he has been one of the first to help."

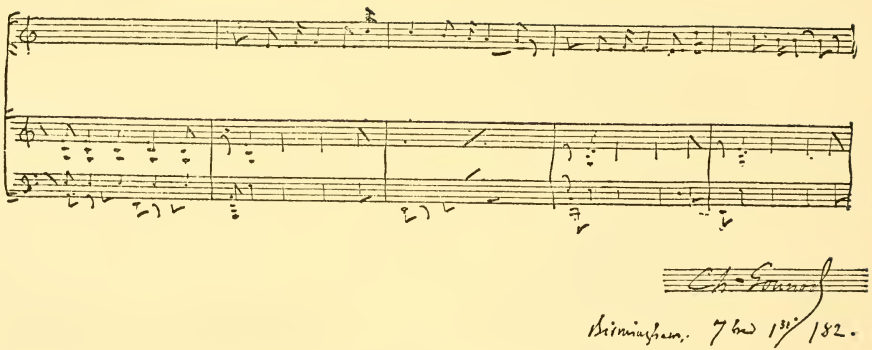
Before taking leave of the master as a dramatic composer it is necessary to mention a

musical version of Molière's "Georges Dandin," which has never been performed, and may possibly be still unfinished. The peculiarity of this work consists in the fact of the music being composed to Molière's actual prose. In a preface destined to precede the above opera, Gounod has exposed his ideas with a considerable amount of ingenuity regarding the superiority he considers that prose possesses over verse for operatic purposes. It is to be hoped that an opportunity may some time or other be offered to the public of judging the practical value of these theories by the production of "Georges Dandin." According to Gounod, the substitution of prose for verse opens to the musician "an entirely new horizon, which rescues him from monotony and uniformity." The question, it may be added, had already been mooted by Berlioz, who expressed himself favourable to the employment of prose in an article published in 1858.

There remain two important compositions of Gounod's to be mentioned, both of which natu-

rally possess great interest to the British public, having been heard for the first time in England. "The Redemption," which was produced at the Birmingham Festival of 1882, has obtained a great and lasting success amongst us. It forms part of the current *répertoire* of the Royal Choral Society.

Gounod has preceded the score of what he terms a sacred "trilogy" with a few explanatory words. He describes his work as being the expression of the three great events upon which rest the existence of Christianity: (1) The Passion and death of the Saviour; (2) His glorious life on earth between His resurrection and ascension; (3) The diffusion of Christianity throughout the world by the apostolical mission. These three parts of the "trilogy" are preceded by a prologue on the Creation, the first Fall, and the promise of a Redeemer. This is, indeed, an ambitious programme, and it is scarcely to be wondered at that Gounod should not have succeeded altogether in realising it. The music rarely approaches the grandeur and depth of



FACSIMILE OF AUTOGRAPH SCORE BY GOUNOD

expression requisite for an adequate interpretation of such a theme. It is full of sensuousness and mystic charm, but although containing several numbers of undeniable beauty, the effect of the work as a whole is decidedly monotonous. Having dedicated the "Redemption" to Queen Victoria, Gounod dedicated "Mors et Vita," a sacred "trilogy" produced at the Birmingham Festival of 1885, to Pope Leo XIII. This companion work to the "Redemption" is at least equally ambitious in its scope. The first part consists of a "Requiem," the second is descriptive of the Judgment, and the last deals with Eternal Life. Hence its title, "Mors et Vita." This work has not obtained the same popularity in England as the "Redemption," to which I personally am inclined to prefer it.

Having arrived thus far in the composer's life, I will have to content myself with the bare mention of works, such as the incidental music written by him to "Les Deux Reines," "Jeanne D'Arc," and "Les Drames Sacrés." Gounod is also the author of two symphonies, composed at

an early stage of his career, several masses, and other religious works. As a song-writer he has greatly distinguished himself, and his melodies have long been the delight of vocalists all the world over. Amongst these is one that deserves special mention and has probably done more to popularise his name than the majority of his larger works. I allude to the famous "Ave Maria," composed upon the first prelude of Bach. A facetious Teuton a year or two ago published a book purporting to contain biographies of great musicians. His sketch of Bach runs thus: "John Sebastian Bach owes his great reputation almost entirely to the fortunate circumstance that he received a commission to write the accompaniment to a famous melody by Gounod. With a most incomprehensible impertinence he also published his accompaniment, without Gounod's melody, as a so-called 'prelude,' together with a number of small pieces under the title of 'Wohltemperirte Clavier,' but the book had little success, on account of its silly title, among the admirers of

the melody. His numerous sons are, to the annoyance of historians, also called Bach."

Gounod has lately attempted to improve (?) another of Bach's preludes, but with indifferent results. Such things are not to be repeated. Amongst his other songs it is only necessary to mention at random such exquisite gems as the "Serénade," "Medjé," "Le Vallon," "Le Printemps," "Au Printemps," "Prière," "Ce que je suis sans toi," &c., in order to revive the most delightful recollections. Occasionally the composer of "Faust" has been tempted to express his views upon art and artists. Of late years he has exhibited an exuberant admiration for Mozart, upon whose "Don Juan" he has written a pamphlet abounding in expressions of the most dithyrambic description. In a preface to the "Lettres Intimes" of Berlioz, he expresses his great admiration for that master. He has also written two interesting and eulogistic notices of Saint-Saëns's "Henry VIII." and 'Ascanio."

Composers are proverbially bad judges of

each other's works. This is probably due to the fact that every composer looks upon his art from a special point of view, and is often unable to appreciate works that are constructed upon different lines to his own. Every one knows the manner in which Weber and Spohr criticised Beethoven, and how Schubert was unable to perceive the beauties of Weber's "Euryanthe." Meyerbeer fared badly at the hands of Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Wagner. The last-named has been freely condemned by many of his contemporaries. Nevertheless, there is a decided attraction in hearing the opinion of one creative artist about another, and Gounod's ideas concerning some of the great musicians are worth recording. We are already aware of his boundless enthusiasm for Mozart, whom he terms "the first, the only one." Bach and Beethoven have also exercised their sway upon him, and both these masters run the composer of "Don Giovanni" hard in Gounod's estimation. He is reported to have one day expressed himself in the following terms concerning Bach:

"If the greatest masters, Beethoven, Haydn, Mozart, were to be annihilated by an unforeseen cataclysm, in the same manner in which the painters might be through a fire, it would be easy to reconstitute the whole of music with Bach. *Dans le ciel de l'art, Bach est une nébuleuse qui ne s'est pas encore condensée.*"

According to Mdlle. de Bovet, "Rossini is in Gounod's estimation the most limpid, broad, and lofty of lyric authors"—after Mozart be it said. This certainly would seem to upset my theory that a composer is not able to appreciate works conceived after different methods to his own, for what operas could possibly be more opposed in style than say "Semiramide" or "La Gazza Ladra" and "Faust?" Certainly, if we read the following passage in Mdlle. de Bovet's book we find that Gounod considers that Rossini's work "is summed up in two masterpieces of strangely opposite character, 'Il Barbiere di Seviglia' and 'Guillaume Tell,'" which possibly qualifies the force of the preceding passage. His appreciation of Berlioz is curious.

According to Gounod, the composer of the "Romeo and Juliet" symphony is "fantastical and emotional; he suffers, he weeps, he grows desperate, or loses his head. The personal side of things seizes hold of him: he has been called the Jupiter of music. Granted; but a Jupiter who stumbles, a god who is a slave to his passions and his transports; but withal possessing masterly qualities: a marvellous colourist, he handles orchestration—which is the musician's palette—with a sure and powerful grasp. And then we come suddenly amongst remarkable passages, upon mistakes, awkward bits, betraying a tardy and faulty education—in short, an incomplete genius." As regards Wagner, the composer of "Faust" prefers to keep his opinion to himself, or at any rate only to deliver it in words the ambiguity of which fit them for an illustration of the saying that *La parole a été donnée à l'homme pour cacher sa pensée.*

Gounod inhabits a handsome house in Paris. Mdlle. de Bovet has given the following interesting description of his study, which I will take

the liberty of reproducing: "It is an immense apartment, rising the height of two floors, lit by a broad window with light-stained glass; it is panelled with oak and vaulted like a church. And is it not the sanctuary of art? At the further extremity, on a platform reached by several low steps, stands a large organ by Cavaillé Coll; the bellows are worked by a hydraulic machine in the basement. A medallion representing a head of Christ is placed in the centre of the instrument. The writing-table, under the stained-glass window, is one of those composite ones used by musicians, a movable keyboard sliding backwards and forwards under the desk at will. The Renaissance mantelpiece in wood, richly carved in high relief representing scenes of the Passion, is decorated with a bronze medallion of Joan of Arc and massive iron ornaments. In the centre of the room is a large grand piano by Pleyel. One side is filled with bookcases—works on Theology and Philosophy occupying a conspicuous place—and with musical scores; amongst these, the

collection of ancient ones inherited by Gounod from his father-in-law is extremely valuable." "In this immense room," writes Mons. Pagnerre, "the author of 'Faust' can often be seen, clad in black velvet, with a loose cravat round his neck, and his feet imprisoned in small slippers fit for a woman. There is ever something feminine about Gounod. His conversation is charming and persuasive. The musician is a witty and eloquent conversationalist. His physiognomy is mobile, his voice is soft, and when he speaks it is like music."

The individuality of a great composer is ever attractive to his admirers, and when in addition to his gifts as a creator he possesses that peculiar qualification known as "personal magnetism," their enthusiasm occasionally causes them to outstep the bounds of common-sense. It is especially members of the fair sex who are prone to indulge in exaggerated expressions of hero-worship. The emotional nature of music causes it to appeal to their minds with such intensity that they make a fetish of their idol,

and fall down and worship not only him but everything he touches and looks upon. There are plenty of most amusing incidents on record which might be cited in support of this. Amongst these I will mention the following, concerning which it may be said, *Se non e vero e ben trovato :*

A story is told of a lady admirer of his who once paid him a visit. Noticing a cherry-stone on the mantelpiece, she annexed it, took it home and had it set by a jeweller as a brooch, surrounded by diamonds and pearls. Paying a visit to Gounod some weeks later the lady drew attention to her act of reverence, when Gounod said: "But, madam, I never eat cherries; the stone you found on the mantelpiece was from a cherry eaten by my servant Jean! Tableau!

In summing up the qualifications of a great composer—and as such there can be no doubt that Gounod must be reckoned—it is evidently better to dwell upon that which he has actually

achieved than upon what he may have left undone.

The composer of "Faust" has imprinted his mark in an unmistakable manner upon his epoch. He has struck a note that had not previously been heard, and if he has perhaps reiterated this note somewhat too frequently, thereby attenuating its effect, the credit of having been the first to employ it must not be refused to him.

Mons. Adolphe Jullien judges him severely when he says that the more he has had occasion to hear and study his works, the more convinced he has become that Gounod possesses the genius of assimilation. According to him, the greatness of Gounod's talent is derived through the study of the works of all the masters, and especially of those of Bach, Handel, Schumann, and Berlioz. This I consider open to doubt. That Gounod has studied the works of his predecessors and profited thereby is evident, but this has been the case with all musicians. Something more is required to

compose a work such as "Faust"; that something which is the appanage of but few composers, and which is known as "individuality."

Mons. Arthur Pougin, in his Supplement to Fétis's "Dictionnaire des Musiciens," thus describes the genius of Gounod: "Musically and as regards the theatre, M. Gounod is more spiritualistic than materialistic, more of a poet than a painter, more elegiac and more nervous than truly pathetic. It is perhaps this that has caused people to say that he lacked dramatic feeling; those who have expressed themselves thus have been mistaken, for it is not the dramatic feeling—that is to say, *la perception passionée*—which Gounod occasionally wants, but rather the temperament. At the same time, the author of 'Faust,' 'Roméo,' 'Le Médecin Malgré Lui,' remains a true poet, an inspired creator, an artist of the first rank and of high order."

The essence of the master's genius is contained in "Faust." Although since then he has composed many works of great merit, yet he has

never been inspired to a similar degree. He may have abused certain formulas, and employed the same devices *ad nauseam*, but at any rate he can claim them as his own. It is not his fault if his imitators have reproduced his mannerisms to so great an extent.

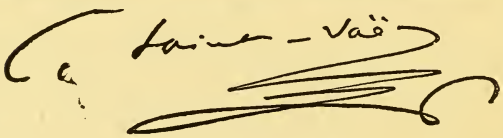
Ernest Reyer once remarked that every one nowadays wrote music in the style of Gounod. "So far," added the witty Academician, "it is still that of Gounod himself that I prefer." This opinion, I venture to think, will probably be endorsed by my readers.

I cannot better terminate this notice on the composer of "Faust" than by reproducing the following sonnet addressed to him by Camille Saint-Saëns:

"*Son art a la douceur, le ton des vieux pastels*
Toujours il adora vos voluptés bénies,
Cloches saintes, concert des orgues, purs autels;
De son œil clair, il voit les beautés infinies.

Sur sa lyre d'ivoire, avec les Polymnies,
Il dit l'hymne païen, cher aux Dieux immortels.
'Faust,' qui met dans sa main le sceptre des génies
Egale les Juan, les Raoul et les Tell.

De Shakespeare et de Goethe il dore l'auréole ;
Sa voix a rehaussé l'éclat de leur parole,
Leur œuvre de sa flamme a gardé le reflet.
Echos du Mont Olympe, échos du Paraclet
Sont redis par sa Muse aux langueurs de créole ;
Telle vibre à tous les vents une harpe d'Eole."



CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS

THERE probably does not exist a living composer who is gifted with a musical organisation so complete as that of Camille Saint-Saëns. A perfect master of his craft, the French composer has contributed his quota to every branch of his art, and may truly be said to have distinguished himself in each. An eclectic in the highest sense of the word, Saint-Saëns has attempted every style and form, disseminating his works right and left with seemingly reckless prodigality. Never at a loss for an idea, invariably correct and often imaginative, going from a piano concerto to an opera, and from a cantata to a symphonic poem with disconcerting ease, composing rapidly, yet never exhibiting any trace of slovenly workmanship, finding time in the meanwhile to dis-

tinguish himself as organist and pianist, and to wield the pen of the critic, the astonishing capabilities of this wonderfully gifted musician may be put down as absolutely unique. His eclecticism may indeed be said to have been with him both a source of strength and weakness, for reasons which I shall propose to examine later on. Before endeavouring to formulate an opinion upon his multifarious works, a few biographical notes will not be out of place.

Camille Saint-Saëns was born on October 9, 1835. He lost his father when a child, and was brought up by his mother and his great-aunt, thanks to whose combined care he was able to battle against the natural delicacy of his constitution. Many anecdotes are related concerning the precocity of his musical development, and the ease with which he mastered those first principles of his art which usually appear so trying to the youthful mind.

One day, when he was at play, a visitor having been ushered into the adjoining room, the

child, in listening to his footsteps, gravely observed, to the amusement of those present: "That gentleman in walking marks a crotchet and a quaver." The visitor in question walked with a limp.

It was from his great-aunt that he learnt the elements of music. Later on, he studied the piano under Stamaty,* and composition under Maleden, subsequently entering the Conservatoire in the class presided over by Halévy.

In 1852 he competed without success for the "Prix de Rome," and that same year witnessed the production of his first symphony by the Société de Sainte-Cécile under Seghers.

Twelve years later, he once more entered the lists, but again failed, and the prize was awarded to Victor Sieg.†

Saint-Saëns was luckier in 1867, when his cantata "Les Noces de Prométhée" was allotted the first place in a competition organised for a work to be performed on the occasion of the opening of the International Exhibition.

* B. 1811; d. 1870. † Victor Sieg, b. 1837.

No less than one hundred and two musicians competed for the prize. Berlioz wrote as follows to his friend Ferrand concerning the success achieved by Saint-Saëns: "On avait entendu les jours précédents cent quatre cantates, et j'ai eu le plaisir de voir couronner (à l'unanimité) celle de mon jeune ami Camille Saint-Saëns, l'un des plus grands musiciens de notre époque. . . . . Je suis tout ému de notre séance du jury! Comme Saint-Saëns va être heureux! j'ai couru chez lui lui annoncer la chose, il était sorti avec sa mère. C'est un maître pianiste foudroyant. Enfin! voilà donc une chose de bon sens faite dans notre monde musical. Cela m'a donné de la force; je ne vous aurais pas écrit si longuement sans cette joie."*

A curious incident is related as having occurred on the occasion of this competition. The works sent in naturally did not bear the names of their authors, and many of the judges seemed to imagine that Saint-Saëns' cantata, which was far ahead of the others in point of

† "Lettres Intimes."

merit, was by a foreigner. This caused the veteran Auber to make the following remark: "Je voudrais être certain que l'auteur de ces 'Noces' soit un Français. C'est un symphoniste si sur de ses moyens, si franc du collier, d'allure si libre, que je ne vois pas chez nous son pareil."

The fact of Saint-Saëns having sent his score from London led some of his judges to imagine that they were voting for Sir Julius (then Mr.) Benedict.

Saint-Saëns had been named organist at the church of Saint Merry when only seventeen years of age, and in 1858 was appointed to a similar post at the Madeleine, in succession to Lefébure Wély.* He relinquished this position in 1877, finding that he had not sufficient time to devote to his duties, and was succeeded by Théodore Dubois.† In the meanwhile, the reputation of Saint-Saëns as a pianist had been spreading, and during frequent journeys over Europe he

* Lefébure Wély, b. 1817; d. 1870.

† See last chapter.

invariably met with great success wherever he went.

The opinion of one artist concerning another is ever interesting, and the following words of Hans von Bülow, written in 1859, will give an idea of the esteem in which the great German pianist held his French colleague: "There does not exist a monument of art of whatsoever country, school, or epoch, that Saint-Saëns has not thoroughly studied. When we came to talk about the symphonies of Schumann, I was most astonished to hear him reproduce them on the piano with such an amount of facility and exactitude that I remained dumbfounded in comparing this prodigious memory with my own, which is thought so much of. In talking with him I saw that nothing was unknown to him, and what made him appear still greater in my eyes was the sincerity of his enthusiasm and his great modesty." It must be recollected that at that time Schumann was comparatively little known in France. Testimony of this kind coming from a musician like Hans von Bülow

is indeed precious. We have already seen what Auber and Berlioz thought of Saint-Saëns, it remains to record the opinions emitted by Wagner and Gounod.

The composer of "Tristan," in a *réunion* consisting of several French artists who had journeyed to Switzerland to see him, drank to the health of Saint-Saëns, whom he qualified as the "greatest living French composer."

Gounod has never lost an opportunity of expressing his admiration for his friend's wonderful gifts, and has recorded his appreciation of the surprising versatility so often exhibited by Saint-Saëns in the following words: "He could write at will a work in the style of Rossini, of Verdi, of Schumann, or of Wagner."

Mons. Edouard Schuré has endeavoured to trace the musical physiognomy of Saint-Saëns in the following lines, occuring in the preface written by him to the interesting "Profils de Musiciens" of Mons. Hugues Imbert: "Personne ne possède plus à fond la science technique de la musique, personne ne connait mieux les maîtres, de Bach

jusqu'à Liszt, à Brahms, et Rubinstein, personne ne manie plus habilement toutes les formes vocales et instrumentales. Mons. Saint-Saëns peut dire : 'Rien de musical ne m'est étranger.' Il a abordé tour à tour tous les genres et presque avec un égal bonheur. On remarque chez lui une imagination souple et vive, une constante aspiration à la force, à la noblesse, à la majesté. De ses quatuors, de ses symphonies se détachent des échappées grandioses, des fusées trop vite évanouies. Mais il serait impossible de définir l'individualité qui se détache de l'ensemble de son œuvre. On n'y sent pas le tourment d'une âme, la poursuite d'un idéal. C'est le Protée multiforme et polyphone de la musique. Essayez de le saisir ; le voilà qui se change en sirène. Vous êtes sous le charme ? Il se métamorphose en oiseau moqueur. Vous croyez le tenir enfin ? mais il monte dans les nuages en hypogriffe. Sa nature propre perce le mieux en certaines fantaisies spirituelles d'un caractère sceptique et mordant comme la 'Danse Macabre' et le 'Rouet d'Omphale.' "

Saint-Saëns is no stranger to us. His visits to London have been frequent, and his cantata, "The Lyre and the Harp," was composed expressly for the Birmingham Festival of 1879. This very year, 1893, the University of Cambridge has paid homage to the greatness of the musician by conferring upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Music. His first appearance in London was at the Musical Union in 1871. He played at Philharmonic Concerts in 1874 and 1879, choosing Beethoven's concerto in G on the first occasion, and his own concerto in G minor on the second. He has also been heard at the Crystal Palace, and this year (1893) he again appeared at a Philharmonic Concert, playing the same concerto in G minor of his own composition, and conducting his symphonic poem, "Le Rouet d'Omphale." During one of his visits to London, some ten or twelve years ago, he met with an accident that might have had fatal results. He fell through an open trap-door, and received serious injuries to his back, from which he did not recover for a long while.

Having promised to take part in an arrangement for eight hands of his "Marche Heroïque," at a concert given by Sir Julius Benedict, he somehow contrived to get on to the platform and perform his task, but when it came to acknowledge the applause of the audience he was unable to bend forward or bow, and had to slide off as best he could. As a pianist, Saint-Saëns may be classed in the very first rank. His execution is prodigious, and his lightness of touch quite unique. He is, perhaps, heard at his best when interpreting Bach, with whose works he is as intimately acquainted as any living musician.

Unfortunately, he now seriously contemplates giving up performing in public, not feeling anxious to continue after his powers are on the wane. The reason he alleges will scarcely be accepted as a good one, for so far there has been no falling off whatever in his execution. What is more likely is that he finds he has no time to practise. As a matter of fact he now rarely touches the instrument, and a paragraph that recently

appeared in a paper to the effect that he was in the habit of practising all day long, caused him to indulge in a prolonged fit of merriment. In his humorous way—for Saint-Saëns is a humorist, *comme il y en a peu*—he told me that he considered that an executant should know how to stop in time, and that he was not desirous of emulating the example of certain artists who went on giving concerts until they had completed their allotted span of life, and were capable, even after their demise, of finding sufficient strength to announce a "posthumous recital."

In the course of his eventful career Saint-Saëns has had some amusing experiences of the stupidity of those amateurs who pretend to be musical, and whose knowledge may be put down at zero. The Duchess de C—— once expressed the desire to hear him perform some strictly classical music. A party was organised, and none were invited but those whose musical proclivities were known to be of a serious order. Saint-Saëns seated himself at the piano, and

asked the Duchess de C——, who was by his side, what she would wish him to play. There was a pause, the Duchess thought deeply, and suddenly turning towards him, said she would so like to hear *the Miserere from the "Trovatore."*

On another occasion he was asked by a lady who was giving a party to play something that would not be too difficult of comprehension. "Play a piece suitable for a pack of donkeys," she said. As it happened, Saint-Saëns had just got up a "fantasia" upon Bellini's "Casta diva," one of those drawing-room show pieces utterly devoid of any musical value; so he expressed himself ready to provide the required article. The evening arrived; he sat down at the piano and duly went through his fireworks. The moment the piece was at an end, up jumped a gentleman, who was profuse in his expressions of delight, and warmly clasping the hostess's hand, exclaimed: "I am sure you got him to play this beautiful piece for *my* benefit!"

Having remarked at the beginning of this sketch that Saint-Saëns had distinguished him

self as a composer in every branch of his art, I will endeavour to allude briefly to those amongst his works that have contributed the most to ensure him the supremacy he now occupies amongst the musicians of his country, a supremacy which is practically uncontested, if only for the reason of the universality of his gifts. Whereas other composers occupy, perhaps, an equal or even superior rank in some particular line, there is not one who has shown himself capable of shining in conspicuous fashion in so many varied styles. Mons. Gauthier Villars, in a clever article upon the composer, has remarked that there exist in Camille Saint-Saëns "three men—three temperaments that influence one another. There is an 'absolute' musician, a dramatic musician, and a critic, whose polemics are always erudite, frequently witty, occasionally bitter and violent." These words will serve in a great measure to explain certain apparent inconsistencies that are noticeable in the composer's works. A thorough master of every technical detail of his art, a contrapuntist of unsurpassed excellence,

a musician endowed with a prodigious facility of production, Camille Saint-Saëns has not always been able to keep his productivity within due bounds. His sureness of hand enables him to complete a work in so short a time that he has not invariably given proof of that spirit of concentration which shows itself in the compositions of some masters. With Saint-Saëns it is the impulse of the moment that compels him to compose in one style or another. This will account for the fact that if in some cases his works betray a want of inspiration, yet they rarely smell of lamp oil, or seem unduly laboured. He is essentially a *fantaisiste*, careless of any preconceived plan, but exhibiting a wondrous command of musical resources, and a complete grasp over his subject. The themes he employs may sometimes lack character or distinction, yet no one knows better than he does how best to treat them, and by ingenious transformations to render them interesting. This applies more especially to his chamber music, of which the piano trio in F, op. 18, the piano quartet,

op. 41, and the septet for trumpet, piano, and strings, op. 65, are perhaps the best examples. In these compositions the classical turn of mind, to which a happy admixture of modern elements lends additional charm, is very noticeable. This peculiar combination of the classical and the romantic is a special characteristic in the works of Saint-Saëns, and is found in the majority of his productions. Janus-like, he keeps one side of his head turned towards Bach, Handel, and Beethoven, whilst he finds means with the other of gazing at Liszt, Wagner, and Gounod. These masters have exercised a very marked influence upon his style.

The simplicity of treatment and perfect clearness in the workmanship noticeable in his chamber music, form a distinct contrast to the complexities indulged in by that section of the modern German school represented by Brahms. The perfectly balanced nature of his mind, and his predilection for works of classic proportions, prevent Saint-Saëns from ever falling into any musical aberrations of intellect. At the same

time, he rightly considers that new forms in music do not necessarily imply formlessness, as some people appear to imagine, and in his larger orchestral compositions he has ever displayed a tendency to avoid recognised models. His four symphonic poems illustrate the dual nature of his talent as much as any of his productions. If in these we miss the powerful grandeur of Liszt, we find in its stead a clearer and more compact method of expression.

These four works constitute one of the most abiding titles to the composer's fame. They also offer an opportunity of discussing a question over which there has been much controversy—viz., the position occupied by so-called "programme music" in contradistinction to "absolute music." The partisans of musical reaction, who are ever doing their utmost to stifle any attempt at emancipation from routine, and place every obstacle in the way of true progress, have often directed their sneers against this particular form of art. It is difficult to understand the reason that actuates them when they try all

they can to shut the doors upon the efforts of musicians whose only desire is to serve the cause of true art to the best of their ability. These dogmatic pedants would lead one to believe that "programme music" is the product of our degenerate age, invented by musicians barren of inspiration, eagerly clutching at anything enabling them to earn even a fictitious reputation.

In reality, "programme music," in some form or other, has existed for many generations.

Kühnau, the precursor of Bach, has left a sonata intended to describe the fight between David and Goliath. Bach himself has not disdained the "form" in question. His capriccio on the departure of a friend, with its differently labelled parts, comes distinctly under the above denomination.

It is as well though, in dealing with this subject, to draw a distinction between purely imitative and descriptive music. Whereas the former exemplifies a puerile, and necessarily

inferior, form of art, the latter is susceptible of serving the noblest ends.

It stands to reason that a musical imitation of physical sounds must necessarily fall short of the reality.

A single clap of thunder will produce more effect than all the symphonic thunderstorms that have ever been composed, with all due deference to Beethoven and Rossini. Haydn has attempted to imitate all manner of sounds in the "Creation," from the bounding of a deer to the falling of snow! These things fail to do more than provoke a smile. Music should act by suggestion rather than actual imitation. At the same time, a composer should not be denied the use of any device calculated to aid his inspiration, or to enable him to enlarge the domain of art by the employment of new or little used formulas.

Beethoven and Mendelssohn have both given the sanction of their names to "programme" music, and the example shown by the composers of the "Pastoral" symphony and the "Hebrides"

overture ought to be sufficient to silence the objections of the partisans *quand même* of "absolute" music.

In an admirable article upon the "Symphonic Poems" of Liszt, Saint-Saëns has dealt fully and conclusively with the matter, and I cannot do better than reproduce the French master's own words, which have the advantage also of drawing attention to the great and still imperfectly recognised merits of Liszt as a composer. After laying stress upon the fact that Liszt had dared to break with the traditions regulating the symphonic form, and had by this shown a greater amount of boldness than Weber, Mendelssohn, Schubert, or Schumann, he proceeds to discuss the principle of "programme music" in the following terms:

"To many people, 'programme music' is a necessarily inferior *genre*. A quantity of things have been written upon this subject that I find it impossible to understand. Is the music in itself good or bad? Everything lies there. Whether it be or not accompanied by

a programme, it will be neither better nor worse. It is exactly as in painting, when the subject of a picture, which is everything for the vulgar, is nothing or is but little for the amateur. There is yet more: the reproach made against music of expressing nothing of itself, without the help of words, applies equally to paintings. A picture will never represent Adam and Eve to a spectator who does not know the Bible; it will only represent a naked man and woman in a garden. And yet the spectator, or listener, will lend themselves easily to this deception, which consists in adding to the pleasure of the eyes or ears the interest or emotion of a subject. There is no reason to refuse them this pleasure, neither is there any compelling one to grant it. The liberty in the matter is complete; the artists profit by it, and they are right. What is undeniable is that the taste of the public at the present epoch tends towards the picture with a distinct subject and towards music with a programme, and that the taste of the public, at least in France, has drawn artists in this direction.

'Programme music' is, for the artist, only a pretext to explore new tracks, and new effects require new means."

Saint-Saëns has put his theory into practice with considerable success in the four symphonic poems entitled "Le Rouet d'Omphale," "Danse Macabre," "Phaéton," and "La Jeunesse d'Hercule." Fundamentally different the one from the other, each of these compositions comes under the category of descriptive music, and is intended to illustrate a special subject. In the "Rouet d'Omphale," the composer has employed the well-known classic tale of Hercules at the feet of Omphale as a pretext for illustrating the triumph of weakness over strength.

No words can express the art with which the composer has developed his themes, or give an idea of the delicacy of an instrumentation which, gossamer-like, seems to float in an atmosphere of melody.

Perhaps the most characteristic of the four symphonic poems is the well-known "Danse Macabre." This work is suggested by a poem

of Henri Cazalis, the first verse of which runs thus :

> "*Zig et zig et zag, la mort en cadence*
> *Frappant une tombe avec son talon*
> *La mort à minuit joue un air de danse*
> *Zig et zig et zag, sur son violon.*"

The hour of midnight is heard to strike, and Death is supposed to perform a weird and ghastly dance, which grows wilder and wilder, until the cock having crowed, the excitement gradually subsides, and quiet reigns once more.

The way in which Saint-Saëns has succeeded in musically depicting the above story is intensely original and masterly. The general plan of the piece is perfectly clear and logically worked out. The two themes upon which it is constructed are admirably adapted for the purpose, and susceptible of being employed together with striking effect. There is a certain passage which produces the uncanny impression of the wailing of an unhealthy night wind through the trees of a churchyard. In order to give an imitation of the rattling of bones, Saint-Saëns has

made use of the xylophone. A curious detail to be noted is the introduction, in a species of burlesque manner, of the "Dies Iræ," transposed into the major and converted into a waltz, to which the skeletons are supposed to dance. Strikingly original and ingenious is the effect of the "solo" violin, with its string tuned to E♭, producing a diminished fifth on the open strings A and E♭, which, being reiterated several times, conveys a peculiar sensation of weirdness. The "Dance Macabre" has contributed largely to spread its author's reputation all over Europe. It is undoubtedly one of his most popular works. "Phaéton," op. 39, and "La Jeunesse d'Hercule," op. 50, although less well known, are not the less remarkable. The first of these deals with the well-known story of Phaeton, who has obtained permission to drive the chariot of his father, the Sun, through the skies. His unskilled hands are powerless to retain the steeds. The entire universe is about to perish through the too close proximity of the flaming chariot, when Jupiter strikes the impru-

dent Phaeton with his thunderbolts. Upon this legend Saint-Saëns has constructed a symphonic piece of great descriptive power. The music may indeed be said to tell its own story. A prelude of a few bars describes Phaeton gathering up his reins. He starts, and, presumably, after a preliminary canter, induces the horses to proceed quietly. Suddenly, however, they break away. Vainly does he use all his endeavours to stop them in their frantic course. The catastrophe is nearing, when a formidable crash puts an end to Phaeton and his misplaced ambition.

The instrumentation of "Phaéton" is in itself worth a detailed notice, and is a perfect marvel of ingenuity.

"La Jeunesse d'Hercule" is the most elaborate of the four symphonic poems, and is, perhaps, the least well-known. It attempts to describe the legend of Hercules, who at the outset of life saw two roads open to him, that of pleasure and that of duty. The hero does not allow himself to be swayed by the seductions of nymphs or bacchantæ, but resolutely follows

the path of struggles and of combats, at the end of which he is to receive the recompense of immortality.

In treating this subject Saint-Saëns has given full rein to his imagination, and has shown a complete independence of spirit in the matter of construction. The score of this poetical and original composition will fully repay any amount of study that may be devoted to it. It is, of course, impossible to attempt an analysis of this interesting work in these pages. I would, however, draw the attention of musicians to the wonderfully ingenious manner in which the climax is reached, producing an accumulative effect of concentrated force bursting through its bonds, evidently descriptive of the final triumph of Hercules.

A symbolic meaning is attached to all these symphonic poems, with the possible exception of the "Danse Macabre," and although they are each professedly intended to describe an actual story, this is only used as a means of suggesting the abstract idea that underlies it.

Saint-Saëns has published four pianoforte concertos, the second and fourth of which are the best known. Some years since he told me that he contemplated writing a fifth, but for some reason best known to himself he did not put his project into execution. The second and fourth concertos are two of the most striking examples of the kind that have proceeded from the pen of a modern composer. Why the third should be so persistently neglected is more than I profess to understand, except for the reason that pianists are like the traditional *moutons de Panurge*, and are, as a race singularly destitute of initiative, preferring to follow on the beaten track sooner than give themselves more trouble than necessary.

The form adopted by Saint-Saëns in his second concerto, op. 25, is sufficiently novel. Its first movement is labelled "Andante sostenuto," and commences with a long introduction for the piano, somewhat in the style of Bach. The passionate melody which succeeds to this, and may be considered as the principal theme of the movement, is, however, quite modern in

character. The delightful "Scherzo" and inspiriting "Finale," are slightly suggestive of both Weber and Mendelssohn, whilst bearing the distinctive mark of their composer's personality. In his fourth concerto in C minor, op. 44, Saint-Saëns has departed still further from the usual model. This work is divided into two sections, which include five changes in the "tempo." A noticeable feature in the concerto is the reintroduction in the last movement of themes previously heard in the first, thus producing a sense of homogeneity.

The fourth concerto is the most ambitious work of the kind that Saint-Saëns has written. It is also the best. A few years since, the composer attempted the experiment of performing all four works in succession at a concert given at the St. James's Hall.

Saint-Saëns did not make his *début* as an operatic composer until he had reached the age of thirty-seven, and then only with a one-act opéra-comique, entitled "La Princesse Jeaune," produced at the Opéra Comique Theatre in

1872. This curious little work, the scene of which is laid in China, was not well received and speedily disappeared from the bills. The overture is delightfully quaint, and is occasionally heard at concerts. Now that one-act works are coming into vogue, this delicate little score might well be reproduced.

The reputation acquired by Saint-Saëns as a symphonist, and what is known in France as "un musicien savant," had been sufficient to cause any pretension on his part to aspire to the fame of a dramatic composer to be looked upon with suspicion. Added to this, he had the reputation of harbouring feelings of admiration for Wagner, which at that time was quite enough to prevent a manager from producing his works.

An opera entitled "Le Timbre d'Argent," not to be confounded with Vasseur's operetta "La Timbale d'Argent," was written before the war of 1870, and was destined for the Opéra Comique Theatre. It was, however, not brought out until 1877, when it was played at the

Théâtre Lyrique under the direction of Mons. A. Vizentini.

The influence of Gounod is very apparent in this work, and Bizet even found therein certain affinities with Auber which I confess myself unable to discover. One thing certain is, that this opera has but little in common with Wagner. "Le Timbre d'Argent" reveals the hand of the practised musician, but is very unequal as a whole, and does not occupy an important place in the composer's dramatic outfit. A point to note in this opera is the superiority of the orchestral treatment and general workmanship over the melodies, many of which border upon the commonplace.

The same year that "Le Timbre d'Argent" was produced in Paris, the Grand Ducal Theatre of Weimar announced the first performance of a new opera by Saint-Saëns, entitled "Samson et Dalila."

As many consider this the composer's finest dramatic work, and as it is only comparatively recently that its beauties have come

to be generally recognised, and that it has been incorporated into the *répertoire* of the Paris Opera, a short account of the genesis of this remarkable composition may not be out of place, the more so as it will accentuate the difficulties that appear to beset composers and stand in the way of works of the highest merit.

"Samson et Dalila" was begun by Saint-Saëns before the year of the Franco-German war.

The second act was tried over in private, when the part of Samson was sung by the ill-fated painter, Henri Regnault, who was destined to be killed a year later, during the war. The "Marche Heroïque," composed by Saint-Saëns, is dedicated to the memory of the unfortunate artist.

The score of "Samson et Dalila" was terminated towards 1872, and a performance of the second act was given by Madame Viardot at her country-house at Croissy two years later. On this occasion the gifted hostess undertook the part of Dalila, and all who can remember her incomparable method of singing will agree

that she must have been an admirable interpretress of the passionate accents allotted by Saint-Saëns to the heroine of his opera.

The influence of this admirable artist upon French music has been very great. In a volume of verses recently published Saint-Saëns thus apostrophises her:

"*Gloire de la Musique et de la Tragédie;*
Muse qu'un laurier d'or couronna tant de fois,
Oserai-je parler de vous, lorsque ma voix
Au langage des vers follement s'étudie?

Les poëtes par Apollon vainqueur
Ont seuls assez de fleurs pour en faire une gerbe
Digne de ce génie éclatant et superbe
Qui pour l'éternité vous a faite leur sœur.

Du culte du beau chant prêtresse vénérée,
Ne laissez pas crouler son autel précieux,
Vous qui l'avez reçu comme un dépôt des cieux,
Vous qui du souvenir êtes la préférée!

Ah! comment oublier l'implacable Fidés
De l'amour maternel endurant le supplice,
Orphée en pleurs qui pour revoir son Eurydice
Enhardi par Éros pénètre dans l'Hades!

Grande comme la Lyre et vibrante comme elle,
Vous avez eu dans l'Art un éclat nonpareil.
Vision trop rapide, hélas ! que nul soleil
Dans l'avenir jamais ne nous rendra plus belle !"

In 1875 the first act of "Samson et Dalila" was given in its entirety in Paris at one of Mons. Colonne's concerts.

It was, however, not until the second of December 1877 that "Samson et Dalila" was brought out upon the stage. Liszt, ever anxious to further the progress of art, had been struck by the merits of the work, and undertook to have it mounted at Weimar, where some twenty-five years earlier he had been instrumental in producing "Lohengrin" for the first time on any stage.

Musicians of the calibre of Liszt are indeed rare, and it is right to tender a passing tribute to the absolute disinterestedness of this great man, who never lost an opportunity of helping a brother artist. Having been brought out on German soil for the first time, a fact which the composer should remember when indulging in

those patriotic ebullitions that of late years have so frequently appeared from his pen, "Samson et Dalila" was played at Hamburg in 1883 with Frau Sucher in the principal part.

It was not until 1890 that the opera was given in France, Rouen being the first town in which it was played. During that year it was produced in Paris at the Eden Theatre under the same manager. On this occasion the principal parts were interpreted by Mme. Rosine Bloch and Mons. Talazac, both of whom have recently died.

Lyons, Marseilles, and Aix-les-Bains followed in 1891, and the next year "Samson et Dalila" was given at Toulouse, Bordeaux, Montpellier, Nantes, Nice, Florence, Monte Carlo, Geneva, and Dijon, receiving its final consecration by being produced on a grand scale at the Paris Opera House, having thus occupied a period of twenty years in reaching its goal. It has since then been played in other continental towns. London still remains, and upon this I should like to say a word. The fact of "Samson et

Dalila" being taken from a Biblical source has been accepted as a reason for its non-production in our metropolis. That a work of the most serious import should thus be excluded from our stage when productions of the most futile description are passed without demur, is another example of the contradictions that exist in our pharisaical country.

Not so long ago an operetta was licensed in which ministers of religion were held up to ridicule, and jokes were freely made concerning matters that must by a great portion of the audience have been held sacred, and yet nothing was said. But should some manager think of producing an episode culled from the Old Testament, and treated in a strictly serious and even reverent manner, the British conscience, that article of home manufacture of which Englishmen are so proud, is at once up in arms. We cannot support too many music-halls or give too much encouragement to those bastard specimens of operatic music known as "original" (?) comic operas, but our feelings of

propriety revolt against anything like the stage treatment of works founded upon Biblical subjects. Let us be consistent whilst we are about it. If it is wrong to introduce Samson, Dalila, the Queen of Sheba, Joseph, Moses, or other Biblical personages upon the stage, it is surely worse to sanction the performance of operas or dramas in which scenes are introduced representing the interior of churches, or religious ceremonies of any description! Worse than all is the performance of pieces calculated to throw ridicule upon ministers of religion. To see respectable audiences sitting complacently gazing at a popular actor personifying a clergyman dancing in a *pas de quatre* with his chapel in the background, and to think that some of these very individuals may possibly be numbered amongst those who object to Sunday concerts, is indeed more than strange.

In the meanwhile as this state of things exists, and the musical public is debarred from hearing a work like "Samson et Dalila" on the stage, it may be wondered that no one seems to

have been struck with the idea of producing it in oratorio form in the concert-room. It is not creditable that England should remain the only nation where "Samson et Dalila" has not been given.*

The prejudice existing against the employment of Biblical subjects for operatic purposes is unfortunate, as the fund of material is apparently exhaustless. The story of Samson and Dalila has furnished Saint-Saëns with a plot such as he has since sought for in vain in the pages of English and French history. The less complicated the story, the better it is fitted for operatic treatment. Wagner has exposed his reasons at length concerning the superiority of a legendary over a historical subject. Saint-Saëns is unfortunately not of this way of thinking. Of later years the bias of his mind has been rather tending towards historical subjects.

* Since these lines were written, a solitary performance of "Samson et Dalila," in concert form, has taken place at Covent Garden Theatre during Mr. Farley Sinkins's season of Promenade Concerts, under somewhat untoward circumstances.

"Samson et Dalila" may be considered not only as one of the master's best operas, perhaps even as the very best, but as one of the finest dramatic works produced by any French composer during the last five-and-twenty or thirty years.

A work like this cannot be otherwise than the spontaneous outcome of a composer's feelings, untrammelled by outward considerations. The varied influences that are noticeable in the musical style of Saint-Saëns, and to which I have already made allusion, are perhaps more marked in this work than in any of his other operas. In the first act the choruses sung by the captive Hebrews breathe the spirit of Bach and Handel, and are conceived rather in the oratorio style. As a strong contrast to these we have the dainty chorus of the priestesses of Dagon and their characteristic dance, the fascinating trio in which Dalila endeavours to cast her spell over Samson, and the lovely air, "Printemps qui commence," which terminates the act and which has been sung by every

contralto. Samson's spirited appeal to arms must also be mentioned. The second act commences with Dalila's invocation to love, praying for aid in her design to ensnare Samson. The lengthy duet between the heroine and the high priest is eminently dramatic, and the following duet between her and Samson may be ranked amongst the finest love scenes ever written. It contains a beautiful phrase sung by the temptress when endeavouring to inveigle her victim, which is reproduced later on in an admirably suggestive manner by the orchestra, and reappears in the third act, transformed into a mocking theme, when Dalila is scoffing at her victim in chains and deprived of his sight. The third and last act contains a touching prayer for Samson, bewailing his lost sight, some admirable ballet music, in which the composer has made effective use of the Eastern scale, and a masterly scene depicting the revelries of the Philistines, culminating in the destruction of the temple by Samson. So ends this beautiful score, the merits of which are so trans-

FACSIMILE OF AUTOGRAPH SCORE OF "SAMSON ET DALILA"

parent and yet have remained so long unrecognised.

In "Samson et Dalila" Saint-Saëns had made use of representative themes, and although he has done so in a sufficiently discreet fashion, avoiding anything approaching to Wagnerian polyphony, the fact deserves to be noted as affording, perhaps, the first instance in which the system has been rigorously followed by a French composer. There can be no doubt but that the device contributes to a great extent in securing that unity which is so much sought for nowadays in dramatic works. Another point to be noted is the suppression of detached numbers, the opera being divided into scenes that are logically developed.

The instrumentation of "Samson et Dalila" is rich and varied, yet never unduly complicated. Saint-Saëns knows how to distribute his effects with unerring certainty, and his work is a model of orchestral skill. The opera is scored for a very full orchestra, of which it may be interesting to give the composition. In addition to the

strings and usual wood wind, he employs a third flute, a *cor anglais*, a bass clarinet, a double bassoon, four horns, two trumpets, two cornets, three trombones, a bass tuba, two ophicleides, two harps, three kettledrums, a *grosse caisse*, cymbals, a triangle, a *glockenspiel*, *crotales*, castagnettes made of wood and iron, a *tambour de basque*, and a tamtam.

These constitute a powerful engine of sound, which is made subservient to the composer's will, and reproduces his thoughts with unimpeachable exactitude.

"Samson et Dalila" perhaps remains the dramatic masterpiece of Saint-Saëns. His other operas may be equally remarkable in point of style and more elaborate in the matter of detail, but they often lack that apparent spontaneity which constitutes not the least charm of the Biblical work, and, although containing much that is admirable, are perhaps less inspired. Saint-Saëns could not write an uninteresting work if he chose, and musicians will find much to admire in his later operas. In "Samson et

Dalila" he has succeeded in compelling the admiration of both musicians and the public at large, perhaps for the very reason that when he wrote it he did not attempt to please either, but was content to follow the bent of his inspiration without *arrière pensée* of any sort.

"Etienne Marcel," the composer's next opera, produced at Lyons in 1879, has not received the amount of attention due to its merits. The defects in this work arise from a certain want of unity, consequent upon the obvious desire of the composer to reconcile the conflicting elements of the old and the new schools. Putting such considerations aside, there can be no doubt as to the general effectiveness of the music. The subject deals with a stirring episode of French history. If in treating it the composer has not discarded the older forms associated with the "grand opéra" style, he has imparted a modern colouring to his score which goes far to redeem any shortcomings in this respect. He has been particularly happy in his treatment of the scenes of popular life that abound in this opera.

There is a freshness and an irresistible *entrain* in the ballet music, which is deliciously scored and abounds in charming details. The presence of a waltz in an opera, the action of which is laid in the fourteenth century, may cause some surprise, but it does not do to be over-particular in such matters, and much may be forgiven when the result is so pleasing.

A few years ago it was quite on the cards that "Etienne Marcel" should be performed at Covent Garden, with Mme. Patti in the principal character. The great *prima donna* had taken a strong fancy to the music, and expressed a desire to sing it. Unfortunately circumstances occurred which induced the *diva* to change her mind, and to display her vocalisation in an opera of little musical worth, which has long since disappeared from the *répertoire*.

If would be a thousand pities if an opera containing so much that is excellent should be allowed to suffer perpetual neglect, and it may be hoped that some day we may be afforded the chance of hearing it in England.

The great moment in the dramatic career of Saint-Saëns was now at hand—that psychological moment so long desired and eagerly anticipated by every French aspirant to operatic fame. The doors of the Opera, that *sanctum sanctorum*, was at length to be opened to him. After the comparative failure of such works as Gounod's "Tribut de Zamora," and Ambroise Thomas' "Françoise de Rimini," the prestige of the French school wanted looking after, and some fresh blood was required to renew it. That a composer such as Saint-Saëns should be obliged to go to Weimar and Lyons in order to get played seemed an anomaly, and the author of "Samson et Dalila" was at last, and not too soon, commissioned to write a work for the leading operatic stage of Paris.

Great expectations had been formed concerning the opera that so consummate a musician, and one holding such high artistic notions, would produce. It was held that a composer so well endowed would prove to be the one, *par excellence*, destined to free the French operatic stage from

the bondage of "routine," and be the standard-bearer of French progressive art. These anticipations were destined to be only partly realised. Leaving French history for the nonce, Saint-Saëns found in the life of our much-married monarch a subject congenial to his muse, and "Henri VIII." was produced with success in March 1883. If this opera is ever to be performed in England certain alterations will have to be made, as the inclusion of a Scotch ballet danced at Richmond might tend to ridicule.

It must be admitted that if the book of "Henri VIII." is in many senses disappointing, yet it is not devoid of merit, and contains several highly dramatic situations that have been well treated by the musician. The authors, Messrs. Détroyat and Silvestre, have not adhered entirely to Shakespeare. The action takes place at the time when Henry has begun to be struck with the charms of Anne Boleyn, who also has an admirer in Don Gomez, the Spanish ambassador. The divorce of the King from Katharine of Arragon is at hand, and

the Pope's Legate having refused to sanction it, the King, amidst the acclamation of the people, proclaims the schism with the Roman Church. The last act is perhaps the best. Anne Boleyn is now Queen, and Katharine, who is dying, has in her possession a compromising letter from Anne to Don Gomez. Henry is devoured by jealousy, and comes, accompanied by Don Gomez, to endeavour to obtain possession of this document. Anne has also come to see if she can regain the letter. This leads to the capital situation in the opera. Henry, in order to excite the jealous and revengeful feelings of Katharine, speaks in the tenderest tones to Anne, whose eyes are fixed upon the note that Katharine has in her hands. At length Katharine, having prayed for strength to resist the temptation. throws the letter in the fire, and falls down dead.

There is no denying the dramatic force of this situation, which has been treated by Saint-Saëns in a masterly manner. The splendid quartet which terminates the work, in which the different

emotions of the four characters are depicted in accents as powerful as they are varied, may rank amongst his finest inspirations, and as one of the most stirring scenes in the entire range of modern opera.

An interesting feature in "Henri VIII." is the partial employment of *leit-motiven*. Saint-Saëns, who at one time was looked upon as a disciple of Wagner, has taken pains to dispel this impression. And yet in the first work composed by him for the chief French operatic theatre, he set to work by making use of one of the Bayreuth master's favourite devices. He will probably urge that it is not so much Wagner himself that he has been combating, but the unreasoning enthusiasm of some of his thick-and-thin admirers. This may be so, but the fact remains, that Saint-Saëns has laid himself open to misconception, which might easily have been avoided had he displayed a less militant tendency in his criticisms. At any rate, he has deliberately adopted the system of representative themes in his "Henri VIII.," and if,

whilst so doing, he has not abandoned the old operatic set forms, the innovation is a sufficiently important one to note. It is this attempt to reconcile such antagonistic elements that is held by some as constituting a weak point in this remarkable work. "From the beginning," writes a well-known critic, "we see the two forms of the opera and the lyrical drama in juxtaposition, and thus all unity of style is at once broken."

The opinions of Saint-Saëns himself on the subject of dramatic music are interesting, as they explain the spirit of compromise that exists in all his works. "Henri VIII." was considered by some as foreshadowing a new departure in the composer's style. These were doomed to be disappointed, for the works that have succeeded it are not in any way more "advanced." Saint-Saëns has taken the trouble to write and explain his views on the subject, and from these it is highly unlikely that he will now depart. In a letter written to the editor of the *Carillon Théatral*, soon after the performance of his opera "Proser-

pine," Saint-Saëns expressed himself thus: "My theory of dramatic art is this: I believe the drama is progressing towards a synthesis of different elements, song, declamation, and symphony blending in an equilibrium which leaves the composer free to avail himself of all the resources of art, while it affords the spectator the gratification of every legitimate desire. It is this equilibrium which I seek, and which others will one day find. Both heart and head impel me to pursue this aim, and to this I must adhere. It is for this reason that I am disowned, now by those Wagnerites who despise the melodic style and the art of singing, now by those reactionaries who lay the entire stress on those elements, and consider declamation and symphony as mere accessories."

The above definition of the "musical drama" is rational enough, and I do not see what even the most uncompromising Wagnerite could find to object in it. As to the allusion to "those Wagnerites who despise the melodic style," it would be interesting to know precisely to whom

the composer refers. If there exist a few fanatics who imagine that melody can be banished with impunity, they are in absolute disaccord with Wagner himself, who wrote that "the one and only form of music is melody; no music is conceivable without melody, and both are absolutely inseparable." Mons. Imbert, in an article upon Saint-Saëns, has amusingly termed him "le Wagnérien sans le savoir."

The truth of the matter is, that every composer nowadays is actuated by the same desire, namely, to make his music fit the subject he is illustrating as closely as possible. If the method adopted differs in any way, this must be ascribed to a variety of causes, the composer's temperament, his education, his nationality, and others. As to the interpolation of ballets and sundry *hors d'œuvre* introduced often apparently without rhyme or reason, that still find their way into operas, it must in justice to the composer be remembered that he has a number of conventionalities to fight against and prejudices to

overcome. Every one has not got the prestige of a Wagner, and even he had to fight a fearfully uphill battle, and only reaped the full fruits of his labours at the end of his career.

The taste of the public is little by little coming round to the "lyrical drama" as distinct from the opera, and composers are but following the tendency of the age. The transformation of style that has led Verdi to rise from "Trovatore" to "Otello" is there to attest it.

The next opera—or shall we say "lyrical drama"?—composed by Saint-Saëns was "Proserpine," brought out at the ill-fated Opéra Comique in 1887, the same year during which the theatre was destined to be burned to the ground. Despite its title, this work has nothing in common with mythology. It is taken from an early work by the poet Vacquerie, published some fifty years ago.

The action takes place in Italy during the sixteenth century. Proserpine, a courtesan, is in love with Sabatino, a young nobleman, who is engaged to be married to Angiola, the sister

of his friend. After endeavouring vainly to entrap Angiola and her brother, assisted by Squarocca, a bandit, she seeks Sabatino, who is awaiting his bride. When Angiola enters, Proserpine hides behind some drapery. Maddened by jealousy at hearing the lovers interchange protestations of affection, she rushes forward and strikes Angiola with her stiletto. Sabatino then snatches the weapon from her hands and plunges it into her heart.

This story was considered somewhat melodramatic in Paris, and the *dénouement* has since been somewhat modified. A few alterations have been made in the score, and in its new form "Proserpine" will surely be performed sooner or later. There are some delightful numbers in this opera, which throughout bears the impress of the master's hand. I will especially draw attention to the closing scene of the second act, which is a perfect gem of delicate fancy and exquisite workmanship. The scene represents the interior of a convent, and a

number of mendicants enter to receive alms. Their voices are accompanied by a melodic figure which is repeated in various guises until the fall of the curtain, without ever sounding monotonous in any degree, through the consummate art and skilful manipulation with which it is handled.

With his next opera Saint-Saëns returned to the Grand Opéra, where "Ascanio" was produced in 1890. Benvenuto Cellini is the leading character in this work, but the composer discarded the great sculptor's name as his title, probably out of deference to the memory of Berlioz, whose first dramatic attempt bore that name. These scruples did not trouble Mons. Diaz, who curiously enough brought out an opera bearing that title during the same year at the Opéra Comique, where it met with no success. There has always been something of the mystifier in Saint-Saëns. He likes to go his own way, regardless of what may be expected of him or whether he satisfies the partisans of any particular style of music. Mons. Camille

Bellaigue remarks that he was not much astonished that this work should have produced a feeling of surprise and even of disappointment. "L'œuvre," he says, "que peut-être on attendait puissante et grandiose, n'est que touchante parfois, toujours intime et presque familière."

This definition gives so good an idea of the general character of the opera that I do not hesitate to reproduce it here. The plot of "Ascanio" is rather complicated for a "lyrical drama," the numberless episodes that occur detracting from the continuity of the work. Saint-Saëns appears to have composed the music in a remarkably short space of time, less than a year. Those who take the trouble to study this interesting score, which has been aptly termed a musical mosaic, will appreciate the prodigious amount of labour involved. The composer has again employed representative themes, very much after the system he had previously adopted in his "Henri VIII." The score of "Ascanio" is a veritable monument of ingenuity, and if it does not produce an

altogether satisfactory impression, the fault may be ascribed rather to the book than to the music.

A curious incident in connection with the first performance of this opera was that the composer, doubtless anxious to seek perfect rest after his prolonged labours, and desirous of avoiding the fatigues consequent upon attending its production, took himself away and carefully omitted to leave his address behind. Weeks elapsed, and no news of him was forthcoming. Fanciful stories were concocted of how he had met with foul play. Telegrams were dispatched all the world over, with the result that he was authoritatively declared to have been seen in at least a dozen different places several hundred miles away one from the other. Finally, he was discovered, quite by chance, under an assumed name in the Canary Islands. A visitor staying in the same hotel, hearing some one playing the piano in a manner the reverse of amateurish, and having that morning read about the mysterious disappearance in the

French papers, had the curiosity to go down and verify the suspicions that had occurred to him. He had no difficulty in identifying the composer, and in a very short time the news had spread all over the place. Saint-Saëns then had to pay the penalty of being a celebrity. He wrote thus to Mons. Louis Gallet, his friend and collaborator: "For the last three days, since I have been recognised, I lead an insupportable life. I do not have a moment to myself. I am scribbling you these lines whilst talking. If there is no common sense in what I say, do not be surprised."

The last dramatic work produced by Saint-Saëns is "Phryné," a two-act comic opera, given at the Opéra Comique in the month of May of the present year (1893).

It might have been hoped that a composer such as Saint-Saëns would have thought fit to devote his great gifts to the elaboration of a "musical comedy" that might have ranked side by side with Wagner's "Meistersinger" and Verdi's "Falstaff." Not one of his countrymen

is better qualified than he is for such a task. Perhaps he may undertake it later on. At any rate, he has not attempted anything of the kind in "Phryné," which is modelled upon an old pattern, includes spoken dialogue, and consists of a number of detached pieces, following the conventional practice associated with the Opéra Comique.

In writing this graceful score Saint-Saëns has evidently aimed at simplicity. There are some charming numbers of a melodious nature in this little work, which also displays the composer's capacity of dealing with humorous situations to great advantage. Perhaps the best portion is the "Invocation to Venus," in which the means employed are of the simplest, whilst the results are eminently poetical and effective. "Phryné" has proved very successful in Paris. The title part has been interpreted by Miss Sybil Sanderson, whom the composer has gratified with a liberal allowance of *roulades* and other vocal acrobatics.

It now remains for me to allude to some

of the other compositions of Saint-Saëns in various lines—and what line has he not attempted? That one who has achieved so great a reputation as an organist should also have distinguished himself as a composer of sacred music stands to reason. One of his most representative works of this kind is his oratorio "Le Déluge," which exhibits the peculiar characteristics of his style to an almost equal degree as "Samson et Dalila." Every one knows, or ought to know, the beautiful Prelude with the lovely violin solo, the commencement of which is suggestive of Bach, whilst the end is reminiscent of Gounod. I must also mention his noble "Requiem" and fine setting of the psalm "Cœli enarrant." The "Oratorio de Noël" is an early work, but contains several charming pages.

To analyse in detail all the compositions of this indefatigable worker would take up a volume in itself. I must therefore be content with the bare mention of songs full of originality, such as the "Mélodies Persanes," pianoforte

music like the "Menuet et Valse," "Six études," and the three Mazourkas; violin music such as the three Concertos, the "Introduction et Rondo Capriccioso" so often played by Señor Sarasate, the Sonata, op. 75, for the same instrument; and violoncello music such as the characteristic "Suite," the admirable Sonata, op. 32, and the Concerto, which is a favourite with all 'cellists. Neither must I omit the masterly variations for two pianos on a theme of Beethoven, or the splendid pianoforte transcriptions from Bach. Several of these works may almost be said to rank as classics. Two important compositions remain to be noted, both of which were produced for the first time in England. The first of these is the picturesque cantata "La Lyre et la Harpe," composed for the Birmingham Festival of 1879; and the second is the Symphony in C Minor, first produced by the Philharmonic Society in 1885. It seems strange indeed that a work so remarkable in every way as the last should not be given oftener. Saint-Saëns has not here written a symphony upon the usual model, but

has endeavoured to produce something entirely unconventional, whilst keeping within certain limits, that enabled him to claim the title of symphony for a work which, although possessing many of the characteristics of the *genre*, yet in the matter of form differs much from the compositions of recognised masters. If the influence of Beethoven is not absent, neither is that of Liszt, and there is as much if not more of the "symphonic poem" in a work, that is unique in its way, than of the symphony proper. A curious detail to note is that in this work the organ and piano are added to the usual orchestra.

Saint-Saëns is a very quick worker. The rapidity with which he is able to conceive and transcribe a work of large proportions is all the more remarkable for the reason that his writing never exhibits the slightest sign of that carelessness often engendered by undue haste. The following extract from Mons. Hugues Imbert's "Profils de Musiciens" will give an idea of this: "With Saint-Saëns the conception is rapid; he

writes without pause or hesitation (*d'un seul jet*). Once the idea is chosen and defined, he immediately realises the development. He orchestrates with the greatest ease, whilst conversing, and almost without making any corrections. Scarcely does he find it necessary to have recourse to the piano in order to aid his inspiration. His opera 'Proserpine' was composed at Chaville, without the aid of any instrument. He writes a score or a symphony as he would pen a letter or an article, or as he would solve a problem. A number of instances are cited concerning his prodigious facility of creation; we will only recall the following: A few years ago he had promised to write an *opérette revue* for the Cercle Volney, of which he is a member. A few days before the performance nothing had as yet arrived. Upon inquiry from Saint-Saëns himself it was discovered that he had totally forgotten his promise. 'But,' said he, 'the evil can be repaired;' and in the space of two hours he wrote off twenty-one pages of full score."

Some critics have found the music of Saint-

Saëns devoid of feeling, cold and passionless. How it is possible to come to this conclusion after hearing pages such as the famous love duet in "Samson et Dalila," or the quartet in "Henri VIII.," it is difficult to understand.

And yet Mons. Arthur Pougin, the well-known critic, has not scrupled to pass the following judgment on Saint-Saëns in his article upon the composer, included in the Supplement to Fétis's "Biographie des Musiciens": "Le tempérament musical de Mons. Saint-Saëns est sec, nerveux, absolument dépourvu de tendresse, de sentiment et de passion." After this it again becomes evident that a great man is not necessarily a prophet in his own country. When he penned the above lines Mons. Arthur Pougin was presumably unacquainted with "Samson et Dalila."

In the course of this incomplete sketch of one of the most remarkable artists of his time I have alluded to his polemics as a critic. A few years since, he collected some of his writings together, and published them in a volume

entitled "Harmonie et Mélodie." In this book will be found various criticisms, many of which are as just as they are well expressed, but it is to be regretted that the author should occasionally have thought fit to mix up so-called "patriotic ideas" with his musical opinions.

For many years Saint-Saëns used to be considered one of the ardent champions of Wagner. The moment, though, that the Bayreuth master's music seemed to obtain a firm hold upon the French public, through the medium of the weekly concerts given by Messrs. Lamoureux and Colonne, the French composer's zeal appeared to cool down, and the enthusiast gave way to the critic. Any one is of course entitled to air his opinions, and no one more so than a composer of such eminence as Saint-Saëns. The mistake was that he chose the wrong moment to publish his views, and thereby stirred up a controversy which would best have been avoided.

In 1879 he recorded his impressions of the

"Ring des Nibelungen" in a series of remarkable articles that are reproduced in the volume above mentioned. His opinion of this colossal work was summed up in these words: "From the height of the last act of the 'Götterdämmerŭng,' the entire work appears, in its almost supernatural immensity, like the chain of the Alps seen from the summit of Mont Blanc."

He terminates the preface of "Harmonie et Mélodie" by these words: "I admire the works of Richard Wagner profoundly, in spite of their eccentricities (*en dépit de leur bizarrerie*). They are superior and powerful, which suffices for me. But I have never belonged, I do not belong, and I never shall belong, to the Wagnerian religion!"

This being the case, I am unable to see why the composer of "Henri VIII." should have taken so much pains to qualify his opinions. He admires Wagner, and it certainly would be odd if a composer of his value did not;

but he is anxious to avoid being comprised amongst those fanatics, whose admiration of Wagner prevents their acknowledging the greatness of any other composer.

It may here be noted that when the publisher Flaxland acquired the French copyright of "Lohengrin," the translation was at the author's request submitted to Saint-Saëns, who wrote, in the newspaper *La France*, that when "Lohengrin" was about to be produced in Paris, he, at the desire of the publisher and M. Charles Nuitter the translator, revised the French version and refused to participate in the *droits d'auteurs*.

Amongst his many gifts Saint-Saëns possesses that of the poet, and has proved his capability of writing charming verses. I will quote the following satirical lines written by him after the production of Bizet's "Djamileh," the delightful little one-act work which has recently been revived with success on various operatic boards, the merits of which were totally unrecognised by the Parisians in 1872 :

"'Djamileh,' fille et fleur de l'Orient sacré,
D'une étrange guzla faisant vibrer la corde,
Chante, en s'accompagnant sur l'instrument nacré,
L'amour extravagant dont son âme déborde.

Le bourgeois ruminant dans sa stalle serré,
Ventru, laid, à regret séparé de sa horde,
Entr'ouvre un œil vitreux, mange un bonbon sucré,
Puis se rendort, croyant que l'orchestre s'accorde.

Elle, dans les parfums de rose et de santal,
Poursuit son rêve d'or, d'azur et de crystal,
Dédaigneuse à jamais de la foule hébétée.
Et l'on voit, au travers des mauresques arceaux,
Ses cheveux dénoués tombant en noirs ruisseaux,
S'éloigner la Houri, perle, aux pourceaux jetée."

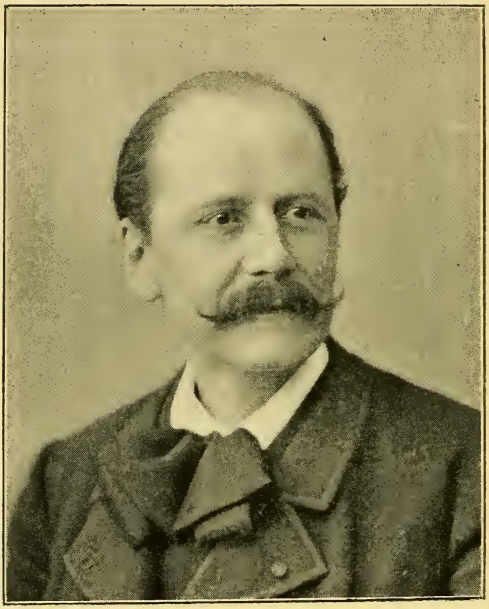
He has lately published a little volume of poems which he has entitled "Rimes Familières," from which I have extracted the lines addressed to Mme. Viardot.

There is a great fund of humour in Saint-Saëns. This has shown itself in many of his works, and occasionally he has given full rein to his fanciful imagination by writing a burlesque set of pieces entitled "Le Carnaval des Animaux," and another time by composing

a parody of Italian opera, which he called "Gabriella di Vergy." Is there not a vein of grim humour in the "Danse Macabre"?

It is related that he once took part in an amateur performance of Offenbach's "Belle Hélène," and interpreted the character of Calchas! A detail to note: the composer of "Samson et Dalila" is still known as "ce jeune maître," although his birthday belongs to the year 1835. It is more than probable that he will keep this title to the end.

Camille Saint-Saëns has retained all his freshness of inspiration, and there is no knowing into what paths his fancy may lead him. But whether he elects to add to the number of his symphonic poems, to produce some fresh example of chamber music, or to elaborate the score of a "lyrical drama," he may rest assured that his doings will be followed with deep attention on the part of all who take interest in music.



J. Massenet

JULES MASSENET

In the year 1842 there lived near St. Etienne, in the department of the Loire, an ironmaster of the name of Massenet, an ex-superior officer of engineers, who had been twice married, and both of whose unions had been blessed in a manner apparently rare in France. In the year in question yet one more offspring was destined to be added to the already crowded quiverful. This child, who was named Jules, was the future composer of "Manon" and "Werther." It is needless to state that, alike to all great musicians, Massenet gave evidence of talent at an early age, to the extent that he was sent to the Conservatoire, where he rapidly distinguished himself.

His family, who at that time resided in Paris, were, however, obliged, on account of his father's

health, to leave the capital. It appears that young Massenet, tormented by the desire to resume studies that had been so brilliantly begun, thereupon made up his mind to quit the paternal roof, which was then situated in the town of Chambéry, in Savoy, and one day, without saying a word to any one, he undertook to walk all the way to Lyons. How he ever got there it is difficult to say, for he had apparently neglected to provide himself with ready cash, doubtless deeming this a superfluity and a needless encumbrance. Trifles such as these sit lightly on a mind of fourteen, and young Massenet succeeded somehow or other in reaching the great manufacturing centre, where he discovered the abode of a relative, and presented himself, tired and hungry, to his astonished gaze. Having explained the cause of his sudden appearance, the young truant was forthwith expedited back to his parents, who, seeing that it was useless to combat so decided a vocation, made up their minds to send him to Paris in order that he might

continue his studies. Unfortunately, it is impossible to live upon air, and during the time when he was mastering the principles of his art the young neophyte was obliged to look for some occupation that would help him to keep body and soul together. This he was fortunate enough to find at the Théâtre Lyrique, where he obtained the privilege of presiding over the kettledrums at a salary of 65 francs a month. It was not precisely riches, but it sufficed to keep the wolf from the door. For six years did Massenet have the opportunity of venting the superfluity of his energies by striking the drums. In the meanwhile he was not idle, and the first prize for piano as well as the first prize for fugue were both successfully awarded to him. Finally, at the age of twenty-one he reached the goal of his ambition, obtained the "Grand Prix de Rome" through a cantata entitled "Rizzio," and departed for the Eternal City, where he remained for two years.

Massenet has himself recorded his impressions of Rome in some interesting auto-

biographical notes published recently in the *Century.*

"It was at Rome," he says, "that I began to live; there it was that during my happy walks with my comrades, painters or sculptors, and in our talks under the Villa Borghese or under the pines of the Villa Pamphili, I felt my first stirrings of admiration for Nature and for Art. What charming hours we spent in wandering through the museums of Naples and Florence! What tender, thoughtful emotions we felt in the dusky churches of Siena and Assisi! How thoroughly forgotten was Paris with its rushing crowds! Now I had ceased to be merely a musician; now I was much more than a musician. This ardour, this healthful fever still sustains me, for we musicians, like poets, must be the interpreters of true emotions. To feel, to make others feel—therein lies the whole secret."

It is natural that with recollections such as these Massenet should consider a sojourn in Rome to be fraught with great advantage to young musicians. He believes that a residence

there "may give birth to poets and artists, and may awaken sentiments that otherwise might remain unknown to those in whom they lie dormant."

It was at the close of the year 1865 that he left Rome, and shortly after, a one-act comic opera from his pen, entitled "La Grande Tante," was produced at the Opéra Comique, according to the regulations, which prescribe that every winner of the "Prix de Rome" should have a one-act work played at this theatre. Massenet's hour had not yet arrived. His "Poème d'Avril," one of his most delicate inspirations, had been refused by a publisher, and he found himself obliged to earn his livelihood by giving lessons.

In 1869 he took part in the competition for the composition of an opera upon a libretto entitled "La Coupe du Roi de Thulé,"* but without success, the prize being awarded to Mons. Diaz,† whose work was subsequently

* Massenet has introduced some of the music of this work into "Le Roi de Lahore."

† Diaz; b. 1837.

brought out at the Opéra without creating any great sensation. This shows the value from an artistic point of view of these competitions.

The Franco-German war came to interrupt Massenet in his labours, and like a good patriot he served his country on the ramparts of Paris.

After matters had settled down he was able to again set to work. His next operatic venture was "Don César de Bazan," played at the Opéra Comique in 1872, concerning which it is not necessary to say much. A piquant little *entr'acte* has survived, and is occasionally heard at concerts. A more important work was the music he composed to Leconte de Lisle's drama, "Les Erinnyes," which still ranks amongst his most remarkable productions.

Massenet has been most successful in imparting a sort of antique colouring to his score. A selection of the music has found its way into the concert-room, and was heard at the Crystal Palace under the composer's direction some years ago. The best numbers are the beautiful

invocation of Electra and the characteristic dances.

The turning-point in the composer's career was at hand. He had written a sort of oratorio entitled "Marie Magdeleine," and having shown the score to Mme. Viardot, this great artist, who had been instrumental in furthering Gounod's *début* as an operatic composer, was much struck by its merit, and determined to have it produced and sing in it herself. "Marie Magdeleine" was accordingly performed at the Odéon in 1873, and created a great stir in musical circles. This delicate and refined score reveals many of the special characteristics well known to those who admire the composer's music. It is very different from what we understand in England as an oratorio. The sensuous vein of melody and the sickly sentimentality which Massenet so often mistakes for true feeling are noticeable in many of its pages. "Marie Magdeleine" was just the sort of work to please a French audience of twenty years ago, whose acquaintance with Berlioz and Wagner was limited, and whose

ideal was bounded by Gounod. It was the Bible doctored up in a manner suitable to the taste of impressionable Parisian ladies—utterly inadequate for the theme, at the same time very charming and effective. These words apply equally to "Eve," a work of the same nature that was produced two years later with equal success.

It is but right to say that Massenet has not employed the title of "oratorio" for either of the above works. "Marie Magdeleine" is styled a sacred drama, and "Eve" a *mystère*. Concerning the first of these Mons. Arthur Pougin informs us that Massenet had not intended to adopt "the broad, noble, and pompous style of the oratorio. Painter and poet, he had endeavoured in this new and long-thought-out work, to introduce *rêverie* and description; he further employed the accents of a veritably human passion, of a tenderness in some way terrestrial, which might have given rise to criticism had he let it be imagined that he intended to follow on the traces of Handel, Bach, or Mendelssohn."

The feminine nature of Massenet's talent has often led him to choose frail members of the fair sex as heroines of his works, such as Mary Magdalen, Eve, Herodias, and Manon. He lacks depth of thought and strength to grapple successfully with Biblical subjects, and the absence of these is not atoned for by an artificiality of expression, and the too frequent employment of affected mannerisms. At the same time, there is a distinct element of poetry noticeable in all his works, and a peculiar sensuous charm is prominent in most of his compositions. These qualities are not to be despised. To them are to be added a richly-coloured and varied instrumentation, and an always interesting and often original harmonic treatment. Massenet's name was now well known to concert-goers, and was shortly to become so to that larger section of the community, the theatre-going public, through the production of his opera "Le Roi de Lahore." Previous to discussing the value of this work it will be well to mention the orchestral suites composed by him

at different times, some of which occupy a permanent place in concert *répertoires*. Of these the most popular is entitled "Scènes Pittoresques," a set of four short movements, simple in structure, melodious, and well scored. There is not much in them, but although the material is scanty the workmanship is extremely clever, and the general effect decidedly pleasing. The "Scènes Dramatiques," after Shakespeare, the "Scènes Hongroises," and the "Scènes Alsaciennes" are interesting and replete with imagination and fancy.

Perhaps the most remarkable of the composer's purely instrumental works is the overture to Racine's "Phèdre," a composition full of passion and feeling, well worked out and admirably orchestrated, which is fully entitled to rank amongst the best modern concert overtures. It is to be regretted that the composer has not produced more works of the same kind. There is a virility of accent and an avoidance of specific mannerisms that may often be sought for in vain in his other compositions.

"Le Roi de Lahore," produced at the Opéra in 1877, obtained a great success, partly, perhaps, owing to the magnificence of the mounting, but also, it must be said, on account of the intrinsic value of the music. A spectacular opera in the fullest sense of the word, "Le Roi de Lahore" was a work eminently suited to a theatre such as the Grand Opéra, where the ballet, *mise-en-scène*, and other accessories rank on an equal footing with the music. It was produced on a grand scale, the ballet act, taking place in the Paradise of Indra, forming one of the most gorgeous spectacles possible.

This act is perhaps the best from a musical point of view. In it Massenet has given full rein to his fancy, and has composed dance music of a really superior kind, which he has enriched with a piquant and effective instrumentation. "Le Roi de Lahore" remains perhaps the best work that Massenet has composed for this theatre. It is more spontaneous than either "Le Cid" or "Le Mage," and

contains many portions of great excellence. Every one knows the suave *cantilena* for baritone that Mons. Lassalle used to interpret in so incomparable a fashion. In his criticism of this work Mons. A. Jullien formulates the following opinion of Massenet and the present school of French composers: "They all know their work admirably, and treat the orchestra to perfection. They have more or less natural grace and tenderness, but they often lack power and originality. They make up for the first of these by the employment of noisy effects, and for the other by a search after novelty that occasionally amounts to eccentricity. Neither have they got sufficiently settled ideas: they try to reconcile the elements of different schools; they do not write any more *roulades* or *points d'orgue*, but they allow singers to spread out their fine voices on final cadences; they understand the necessity of renovating and vivifying the opera, but they only dare to make timid attempts in this direction at long intervals, and return immediately to used-up formulas, to

ensembles, to choruses, and to the most commonplace finales."

There is a great deal of truth in these words; at the same time it is difficult to foresee an epoch when the "lyrical drama" will have attained that state of perfection as to be no more susceptible of improvement. The progress that has been effected in France during these last thirty years in the direction of a higher conception of the musical drama has been enormous. The ball has been set rolling by some of those composers who would perhaps now be anxious to arrest its course, but the impetus having been given, it has been kept going by the younger aspirants to operatic fame, and is not likely to stop.

"Le Roi de Lahore" obtained a distinct success, which was repeated in a number of continental cities, including our own metropolis.

Massenet visited England in 1878, and conducted a concert devoted to his own music at the Crystal Palace. The programme included extracts from "Le Roi de Lahore" and "Les

Erinnyes." He also appeared at a concert given by Mme. Viard Louis at the St. James's Hall, on which occasion he directed the performance of his orchestral suite entitled "Scenes from Shakespeare."

Massenet's reputation was now established upon a solid basis. On the death of F. Bazin he had succeeded him as one of the leading professors of the Conservatoire. He had also been elected a member of the Institute. His next work, a religious cantata entitled "La Vierge," produced at the Opéra in 1880, was, however, coldly received. Massenet, who conducted the orchestra in person, was grievously disappointed at this, but set to work with renewed vigour at an opera entitled "Hérodiade," which was brought out with great success at Brussels in 1881. This work has since been given in Paris, as well as in various continental towns, where it has been well received. The nature of the subject necessarily stands in the way of its being produced in London. Certain extracts, however, have been heard in our concert-rooms.

The score of "Hérodiade" abounds in examples of that sensuous melody so characteristic of the composer. There is very little Biblical about it, and it is to be regretted that another and better subject was not hit upon than this parody of Holy Writ. Massenet's strains would probably have been equally appropriate, and the susceptibilities of those who look upon this sort of thing as a desecration of religion would have been respected.

There is indeed a vast difference between taking a subject like "Samson et Dalila," against which none but the most strict could object, and turning St. John the Baptist into a commonplace operatic hero. If it were not for the libretto, "Hérodiade" ought to be heard in London, as it counts amongst its author's best works, and, despite certain weaknesses, occupies an honourable place in the ranks of modern operas.

The following lines, written by Camille Saint-Saëns after the first performance of "Hérodiade" at Brussels, will be read with interest.

I will not spoil the charm of the original words by attempting to translate them; "La qualité maîtresse de la musique du jeune maître est la fraîcheur, qualité si rare que M. Massenet me parait être le seul à la possèder. On dirait par moments qu'il n'en sent pas le prix, à le voir poursuivre, en apparence du moins, un idéal de force violente. N'est-ce donc rien que le parfum de la rose, la voix du rossignol et l'aile du papillon? Bien des gens trouveront que la rose, le rossignol et le papillon ne sont pas fort a plaindre, et qu'ils n'ont que faire de lutter avec le tigre et le mancenillier."

We now arrive at the work through which Massenet is best known in this country, one which perhaps displays the peculiar nature of his talent to the greatest advantage. "Manon," that very fascinating musical setting of the Abbé Prévost's romance, was first played at the Opéra Comique in 1884. For twelve years no new opera by Massenet had been produced at this theatre, and he had since then conquered celebrity as a dramatic composer and as an

orchestral writer. The famous novel of the Abbé Prévost had already previously been utilised for operatic purposes by Auber, and has since been used as an opera text by the Italian composer Puccini. It furnished Massenet with a subject particularly suited to his muse.

Apropos of Auber's setting, the following story is related:

Auber did not enjoy the reputation of being a great reader. One day he received a visit from a friend, who found him at his writing-table. Upon inquiring what he was working at, Auber replied: "I am busy with the first act of my new opera."—"By whom is the book?"—"By Scribe."—"Might I ask its title and subject?"—"Manon Lescaut."—"Manon! that splendid masterpiece?"—"The romance; do you mean a romance?" asked Auber.—"Yes, certainly."—"Mon Dieu! I have never read that," said Auber.—"What! you write an opera on the subject of Manon, and have not read the story?"—"True; I have not got it in my library,

for I have just been looking for it."—"Well, borrow it from Scribe."—"But I don't think Scribe has read it either," said Auber, "he may have glanced at it to get the situations, but Scribe never wastes his time if he can help it."

Massenet's opera contains an innovation which has a certain importance and deserves to be noted. It is well known that the old-fashioned *opéra comique* comprised spoken dialogue. The tendency of late years has been to abandon this illogical custom, and the ideas of most composers nowadays tend in this direction. Certain ingrained habits are hard to get rid of, and even now there are composers of eminence who either have not the courage or inclination to break with a custom so antagonistic to the principles of the lyrical drama.

Massenet, a musician of compromise, imagined a method which he doubtless thought would give musical continuity to his work without departing absolutely from the customs of the theatre. This was to retain the spoken

dialogue, but to accompany it with an orchestral commentary in keeping with the words. A similar method has been employed with success in dramas for which incidental music has been written. It is not a course that can be recommended for operatic purposes, although the effect in "Manon" is not unpleasing. The analogy existing between the stories of "Manon" and "La Traviata," or rather "La Dame aux Camélias," is sufficiently striking. Several situations are almost identical. In both cases we have a heroine for whom it is difficult to feel much sympathy, a weak young man, and a heavy father given to singing long-winded *cantilenas*. The subject is essentially French, or rather Parisian, and the music of Massenet fits it like a glove. The composer's mannerisms seem less out of place in the mouth of Manon than they do in that of Mary Magdalen. Massenet is essentially a colourist, and even as he had succeeded in imparting an Eastern *cachet* to his "Roi de Lahore," and giving a tinge of the antique to his music for "Les

Erinnyes," so in "Manon" he has felicitously caught the spirit of the last century. This delicately perfumed score is in many places suggestive of the boudoir of a *petite maîtresse*. There are plenty of accents of genuine passion noticeable in the course of the work, such as those in the great duet between Manon and Des Grieux; also in the fine monologue of the latter. It is in what might be termed operas *de demi caractère* that Massenet excels, and he would do well in future to confine himself to this and eschew works of larger calibre, such as "Le Cid" and "Le Mage," the two latest operas that he has produced upon the stage of the Grand Opéra.

"Manon" has been successful on the Continent, but curiously enough, does not appear to have taken much in London, despite the superb interpretation of the hero by M. Van Dyck. An English version was produced by the Carl Rosa Company in 1885, and it has remained in the *répertoire*.

The year after the production of "Manon"

Massenet reappeared as the musical delineator of another French classic. This time he sought inspiration from Corneille, undeterred by the failure of Gounod over "Polyeucte."

"Le Cid" is one of the great dramatic poet's finest works, and one with which I will not do my readers the injustice to suppose them unacquainted. The music of this opera contains much that is excellent, but fails in many respects to do justice to the heroic subject. In his efforts to be powerful the composer is often merely noisy. The best portions are certain *hors d'œuvre*, such as the delightfully characteristic ballet music. "Le Cid" has apparently proved to the taste of the *habitués* of the Opéra, and has been successfully performed on the Continent.

A work which I should from many points of view be disposed to prefer is "Esclarmonde," produced at the Opéra Comique in 1889, the year of the International Exhibition. In this opera Massenet has taken a step in advance as regards the musical form he has adopted.

"Esclarmonde" is constructed more according to the lines of the modern "lyrical drama," and the composer has made use of "representative themes" to a great extent. One of these indeed bears a certain affinity to a motive in the "Meistersinger." This apparent adherence to the principles of the Bayreuth master caused some waggishly disposed critic to allude to Massenet as "Mlle. Wagner." "Esclarmonde" is really a remarkable opera, and should be given in London. The story, which is taken from an old romance of chivalry, is a species of fairy tale and has this peculiarity about it that, reversing the ordinary order of things, it is the heroine who falls in love with the hero, who, it must be owned, does not seem inclined to repel her advances. The lady in question being gifted with magic powers, causes the object of her flame to be transported to an enchanted island, where she visits him every night without his being allowed to contemplate her features. The love duet between the two is one of the most passionate and voluptuous examples of

amorous music that has been heard on the stage. A species of orchestral interlude, played whilst the lovers are gradually surrounded by the trees and boughs of the enchanted island, is remarkably expressive, impregnated as it is with a peculiar sensuousness of utterance and exuberance of passionate feeling. This perhaps is the finest page in an opera that must count as one of its author's best works. Mons. Adolphe Jullien, whom I have had occasion to quote more than once in the course of this volume, remarks that Massenet's great fault is that he alternately attempts every style and perseveres in none. Certain it is that "Le Cid" was a distinct falling off after "Manon," and that "Le Mage," produced at the Grand Opéra in 1891, was absolutely inferior to "Esclarmonde." It is of course impossible for any musician to command inspiration. Certain subjects have the power of appealing to a composer more than others. With Massenet, as I have previously remarked, these rather pertain to the *genre intime*.

"Le Mage" is a spectacular opera upon a large scale, the action of which takes place in the time of Zoroaster.

It furnished grand opportunities for the scenic artists to display their skill, but was admittedly a disappointment from a musical point of view. The composer was destined to take his *revanche* with "Werther," performed for the first time in Vienna on the 16th of February 1892. The composition of this work dates already some years back. It was in 1885, the master relates himself, when he had just terminated "Le Cid," that Mons. Hartmann, his publisher, suggested to him the idea of setting Goethe's story to music. Pleased with the notion, Massenet entered into communication on the subject with Messrs. Milliet and Blau, the authors of the libretto. The book having been supplied, Massenet set to work in the spring of 1885, and the opera was completed at the end of the winter of 1886.

When he was asked for a new opera by the director of the Opéra Comique, to be played

during the International Exhibition of 1889, the composer preferred to let him have "Esclarmonde," deeming this to be more fitted for the occasion.

Having had to go to Vienna to superintend the rehearsals of "Manon," a proposition was made to produce his "Werther" at the Imperial Opera House.

Massenet, in the course of a conversation published in the *Echo de Paris*, gives some interesting details concerning the administration of the two imperial theatres in Vienna.

"Hierarchically, and in the first rank, Prince Hohenlohe, the direct representative of His Majesty, dominates. After him come first a high official personage bearing the title of General Intendant, and then in the third place the director, Mons. Jahn. The artists, including the ballet-dancers, are looked upon as accomplishing a service of State. Each day official carriages take them to the rehearsals. These take place from ten o'clock to half-past twelve, in the most absolute *huis clos*. In the

evening equally, during the performance, no one is admitted either behind the scenes or in the boxes, and this from the point of view of the strictest morality. They play, sing, and dance without any stranger being allowed to be present. The archdukes themselves are not admitted."

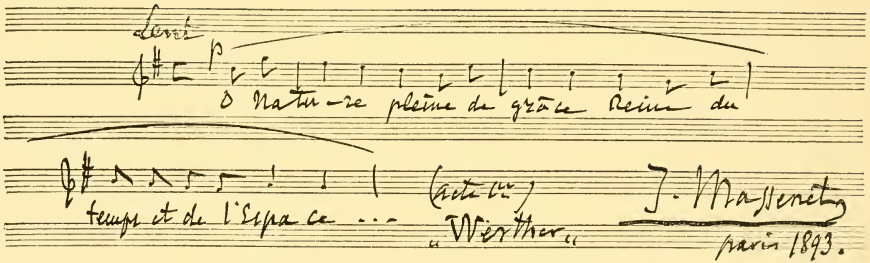
Massenet also gives an account of the trying ordeal he underwent when playing through his score for the first time before the director and all the artists. He was admitted into an immense and luxuriously furnished room, capable of containing over 200 people. "All the artists," he relates, "were seated there, grouped in a charming but imposing *ensemble.* At my entrance they all got up and bowed. The director approached me and said a few amiable and too flattering words of welcome. All this was assuming the intimidating aspect of an official reception. I felt much moved. With the exception of my two old interpreters, Mdlle. Renard and Vandyck, I knew no one. Meanwhile the director led me to the piano, on

the desk of which my yet unpublished score was placed, open at the first page. I sat down on the stool and was about to strike the first chord. . . . . At this moment I must tell you an intense feeling of emotion came over me. . . . . My heart was beating as if it would burst. . . . . In one second, with a really painful intensity, I felt the vivid notion of the artistic responsibility which I was incurring. . . . . What a terrible game I was about to play. . . . . This score of 'Werther' was six years old. . . . . I scarcely had it in my memory. . . . . How many works by me had not been played since. . . . . I was finding myself, alone, far from my country, representing by the force of circumstances French musical art. . . . . On the other hand, I had full conscience of the undeserved honour that was being conferred on me. . . . . Was I not in Vienna, the guest of the Emperor, invited at the expense of the State, and remembering that alone two masters before me—both above criticism—Verdi and Wagner, had been the objects of such a high and such a

precious distinction? . . . . All these thoughts suddenly came into my brain; tears rose to my eyes, and stupidly, like a weak woman, I began to weep. Then what kindness and delicate attention was shown all around me. 'Courage, courage,' was said to me from all sides. I made an immense effort, and still trembling with emotion I played through the entire score. This was in Vienna the first hearing of 'Werther.'"

In Goethe's sadly pathetic story, Massenet has found a subject eminently suited to the peculiar nature of his talent. The idyllic charm of the sad tale has inspired him to write pages full of poetry and refinement.

"Werther" was a distinct success in Vienna, and this success was repeated when the opera was produced in Paris at the Opéra Comique. Massenet has seemingly been desirous in this work of writing a "lyrical drama" rather than an ordinary opera. He has kept his music well within the bounds of a subject so simple yet so interesting and so human. We do not find set



FACSIMILE OF AUTOGRAPH SCORE OF "WERTHER"

duets, choruses, or *ensembles* in this delicate and artistic score, and we need not regret their absence.

Long before Massenet's time, "Werther" had been set to music by Pugnani, musical director to the King of Sardinia. It was played at the Burg Theatre in Vienna in 1796. Pugnani's work was described as a symphony, which the composer sought to make as realistic as possible. On one occasion it was performed at Turin before a party of invited guests. Pugnani conducted in his shirt sleeves. At the moment when Werther dies, Pugnani pulled a pistol out of his pocket and fired it.

Blangini also wrote a cantata upon the same subject, which he entitled "Werther's Swan Song, half an hour before his death." At that time Werther's Lotte (Frau von Kestner) was still living in Hanover, and she journeyed to Cassel on purpose to hear Blangini's work.

A curious thing happened when Massenet's "Werther" was given at Weimar in 1892. Giessen, the Weimar tenor, was deputed to sing

the title *rôle*. His real name happens to be Buff, and he is a grand-nephew of Lotte, whose name was also Buff. When the Weimar performance took place it was therefore discovered that Giessen had to make love to his own great-aunt. In the German version of the opera Goethe's text is faithfully followed. Both Lotte and Werther are drawn from life.

A few days after the first performance of "Werther" at Vienna a ballet, entitled "Le Carillon," by the same composer, to a *scenario* furnished by M. Van Dyck, was successfully produced upon the same boards. Massenet has another opera in readiness, which has not yet been been presented to the public—"Thaïs," a lyrical drama in three acts, words by Louis Gallet.

The composer of "Werther" is an indefatigable worker, and being in the full force of his maturity, may yet be counted upon to further enrich the operatic *répertoire*. Concerning his powers of work the following story is related: The director of one of the French operas, in

speaking with the composer, said, "My dear Master, give me the secret of your abnormal creative ability. Every day you listen to a crowd of singers, you attend every rehearsal, and, besides, you are professor at the Conservatoire. When do you find time to work?" "When you are asleep," replied Massenet, quickly. It is true that Massenet rises every day at five, and works incessantly until midday.

In the Supplement to the "Biographie des Musiciens" of Fétis, edited by M. Arthur Pougin, published in 1880, mention is made of two "lyrical dramas," entitled "Robert de France" and "Les Girondins," upon which the composer was supposed to be engaged at the time. I am not aware whether these have been finished or not. Recently he has terminated the orchestration of Léo Delibes' "Kassya," left unfinished.

Whatever the composer's defects may be (and who is free from them?), there can be no doubt that Massenet has indisputably a style of writing peculiar to himself, which is more than

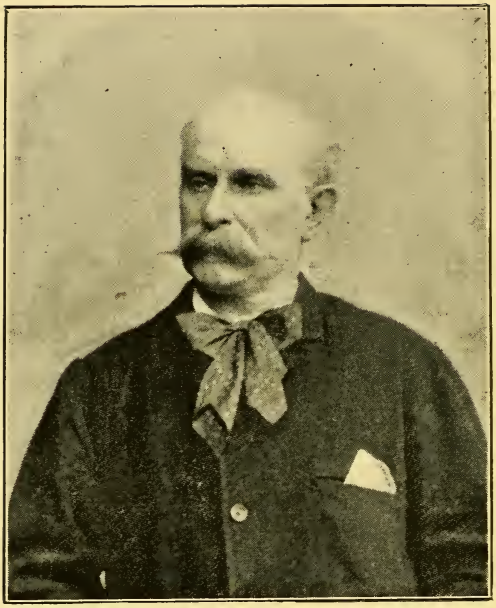
can be said of all of his "confrères." His individuality may not be so marked as that of Gounod, whose influence, by the way, can be traced in some of his compositions, but it is none the less existent, and has been reflected in the works of many of his pupils.

Few musicians can touch him in the art of handling the orchestra. At the time when he was studying at the Conservatoire he astonished every one by the prodigious amount of work he got through, and the ease with which he was able to compose. This facility of production does not seem to have deserted him, and the danger lies, not in his composing too little, but in producing too much.

Massenet's position is so well established that he can now afford to concentrate his mind upon his work without troubling himself as to whether or not it pleases the superficial portion of the public. What he now requires is a good subject and a well-written libretto. I trust he may find both.

Although necessarily absorbed by his multi-

farious labours, Massenet finds time occasionally to attend to his social duties. A story is told of how one evening, when he was dining out, the mistress of the house insisted upon making him listen to her daughter's playing. At the end of the performance, upon being asked his opinion, Massenet gravely remarked that it was quite evident that the young lady had received a Christian education. "Why?" ejaculated the surprised parent. "Because she so scrupulously observes the precept of the evangelist—her right hand knoweth not what her left hand doeth."



P. Lenz

ERNEST REYER

"NOWADAYS, more than ever, musicians have the leisure to occupy themselves with other things than music."

These bitter words, savouring of disappointed expectations, occur in the preface to the volume entitled *Notes de Musique*, written by Ernest Reyer and published in 1875.

Since that time the author of the above lines has received a tardy compensation for a somewhat unaccountable neglect, and his operas "Sigurd" and "Salammbô" have achieved what promises to be a permanent success at the Paris Opera.

Although the composer of these works is but little known in this country, yet he none the less occupies an honourable position in the front

rank of modern musicians. His "Sigurd," which was given at Covent Garden some few years since, did not meet with the success due to its unquestionable merits.

A man of strong convictions, imbued with a high ideal and averse to anything approaching the spirit of compromise, Ernest Reyer had to wait longer before receiving due recognition than if he had been disposed to pander to the taste of the public at the cost of his artistic principles. This he has never done but he has been satisfied to work quietly and wait patiently until his hour should arrive, careless of popularity, and content to devote his talents to the sole cause of art. Born on Dec. 1, 1823, at Marseilles, Ernest Reyer at the age of sixteen went to Algeria, where he spent some time, living with his uncle, who had an appointment in the province of Constantine.

It may be that the early influences of the *milieu* in which he was thrown may have had something to do with developing a tendency he exhibited later on of setting Oriental

subjects to music. His first important work was an eastern symphonic ode, entitled "Le Sélam," the words of which were by Théophile Gautier, produced in 1850. This composition had the misfortune to come a little too late. Félicien David, in his "Désert," had already musically illustrated a subject in many ways similar, and the success of his work proved detrimental to that of his younger colleague.

Many years later (in 1876), Ernest Reyer was destined, curiously enough, to succeed Félicien David as a member of the Institute.

The *début* of Reyer as a dramatic composer dates from the year 1854, when "Maître Wolfram," a one-act opera, was produced at the Opéra Comique. This was followed in 1858 by "Sacuntala," a ballet, at the Opéra; and in 1861 by "La Statue," at the Théâtre Lyrique. It was this last work which brought the composer's name in a prominent manner before the public. The distrust that existed at that period against all musicians holding so-called "advanced" ideas naturally affected Ernest Reyer,

who was known to be an intimate friend of Berlioz, and to hold unorthodox views with regard to the nature of dramatic music. "Le Sélam" had come too late, "La Statue" arrived too soon. At a time when the beauties of "Tannhaüser" were unrecognised and this work had been hissed off the stage, when even Gounod's "Faust" was looked upon with suspicion, it is not surprising that a work exhibiting qualities of so serious a nature as "La Statue" should have met with only a partial success. At the same time the qualities abounding in this work were recognised by the press, and its author was by common consent classed among the most rising composers and looked upon as one from whom much was to be expected.

"La Statue," in its original form, included spoken dialogue. On the occasion of its revival at the Opéra Comique in 1878, the composer set this to music, to the great advantage of his work, thereby insuring that continuity which nowadays is rightly regarded as essential in operas of serious import.

The music to this work is impregnated with an indefinable Oriental colouring which imparts to it an undoubted measure of charm.

To Félicien David must be accorded the credit of being perhaps the first to employ distinctively Eastern characteristics. It was doubtless this that helped to ensure the prodigious success that attended "Le Désert." Without in any way laying himself open to the charge of plagiarism, Reyer may be said to have followed in his footsteps with conspicuous success. Since then many composers have treated Oriental subjects, and have endeavoured to invest their music with the peculiar "cachet" associated with the East. Amongst these may be mentioned Bizet, in his "Pêcheurs de Perles" and "Djamileh," Rubinstein in "Feramors," Goldmark in "The Queen of Sheba," Saint-Saëns in "Samson et Dalila," Massenet in "Le Roi de Lahore," Bruneau in "Kérim," and Villiers Stanford in "The Veiled Prophet."

Bizet considered "La Statue" as the most remarkable opera that had been given in France

for twenty years. It is sad that this, in company with many other works of value, should never have been offered to the judgment of the British public.

The composer's next operatic venture took place on German soil. It was at Baden-Baden, at that period in the prime of its glory and the chosen playground of Europe, that "Erostrate," a two act opera, was brought out in the summer of 1862.

Nothing at that moment seemed to presage any strained relations between France and Germany. French tourists came in crowds to the gay watering-place and deposited their offerings with a light heart in the temple of chance presided over by Mons. Bénazet; that very same year a cantata, the words of which were by Méry and the music by Reyer, given at Baden-Baden, celebrated the praises of "The Rhine, symbol of peace."

Quantum mutatus ab illis. The French element disappeared with the war of 1870, and the suppression of the tables has long since

brought Baden-Baden down to the same level of respectability as many another "Kurort."

Musical amateurs sojourning in the picturesque valley of the Grand Duchy of Baden at this epoch seem to have had a good time of it.

Berlioz was in the habit of directing every year a grand festival at which were performed extracts from his orchestral works. Reyer states that each concert given by Berlioz used to cost a matter of 20,000 francs to Mons. Bénazet the energetic head of the "Kurhaus." Certain it is that this enterprising director must have had strong musical proclivities, for it is to his initiative that the production of Berlioz's "Béatrice et Benédict" is due. This work served to inaugurate the opening of the new theatre at Baden. Two days later witnessed the first performance of Reyer's "Erostrate," which was shortly afterwards followed by another new work, "Nahel," by Henry Litolff. "Erostrate" seems to have pleased the cosmopolitan public of Baden better than it did Parisian amateurs when it was transferred to the Grand Opéra ten years later, where

it was only accorded two representations. The composer was reproached at this time for having dedicated his score to the Queen of Prussia. As if it were possible for any one, in 1862, to foresee the course of events that were destined to happen in 1870. Patriotism occasionally seems to have the effect of deadening the intelligence.

It certainly appears strange that after the favourable reception accorded to "La Statue" in 1861, Reyer should have been ostracised from the Paris theatres, if we except the two performances of "Erostrate" in 1872, and the revivals of "Maître Wolfram" in 1873, and of "La Statue" in 1878, for a period of twenty-four years, when he made a triumphal reappearance at the Opéra with "Sigurd." This last opera had been performed the year before at Brussels.

The Belgian capital seems to be a sort of refuge for those French composers who experience a difficulty in obtaining a hearing in their own country.

It was at the Théâtre de la Monnaie that the

following operas were first produced: Reyer's "Sigurd" and "Salammbô," Massenet's "Hérodiade," the brothers Hillemacher's "St. Mégrin," Godard's "Jocelyn," and Chabrier's "Gwendoline." It was also there that some of Wagner's later music dramas were heard for the first time in French.

"Sigurd" had been composed many years previous to its production on the stage, and fragments had frequently been introduced into the concert-room. I recollect myself hearing an important extract performed at one of the far-famed Conservatoire concerts, and the overture at one of Pasdeloup's concerts, in 1876. The subject of this opera is taken from the same source as Wagner's "Ring des Nibelungen."

Sigurd and Siegfried are one and the same individual, and many of the incidents of the French composer's opera are identical with those that occur in the "Götterdammerŭng." This is, of course, unfortunate, and although it has been pointed out that Reyer composed his work before the completion of the "Ring," yet

he must have been aware that the German master was treating the same subject, considering that Wagner had published the poem of his four works as far back as 1853. Notwithstanding the reputation he had already achieved, endless difficulties had to be surmounted before Reyer was able to get his work performed. The nature of the subject frightened Mons. Halanzier, the then director of the Paris Opéra, who imagined that the barbarous sounding names of the leading characters might prove objectionable to the public. Who had ever heard of Sigurd, Hagen, Gunther, or Hilda? The last name seemed especially to act upon his nerves. "Why not call her Bilda?" he exclaimed. "Do I call you Balanzier?" answered Reyer. There was nothing for the luckless composer to do but wait for another opportunity, which happily occurred some years later.

It is immensely to the French composer's credit that, in spite of inevitable comparisons, he should have been able to succeed as well as he has.

"Sigurd" is full of dramatic power, and

bears evidence of the constant endeavour of the composer to fit his music to the sense of the words, avoiding as much as possible any of those conventional effects so dear to the uneducated section of the public. His style has been described as proceeding from Gluck and Weber, whilst his admiration for Berlioz and Wagner reveals itself in the richness and variety of his instrumentation. This appreciation is perfectly correct, and although his operas may be criticised in some respects, they reveal a true artistic temperament both in their method and execution. It may be said with truth that Reyer's individuality is not of the most marked, that his melodies sometimes lack distinction, and that his inventive faculty is scarcely equal to his skill in making the most of his materials; but none will contest the true artistic feeling that presides over all his compositions, or deny him the possession of strongly pronounced convictions impelling him to do his utmost towards raising the standard of operatic art.

After having been the first town to offer hospitality to "Sigurd," Brussels was destined to have the *primeur* of "Salammbô," the last opera that Reyer has composed, which was brought out in 1890 with great *éclat*, and produced later on in Paris, where it at once succeeded in establishing itself in the favour of the public. Perhaps of somewhat less sustained interest than "Sigurd," the music of "Salammbô" shows the same tendencies on the part of its composer to adhere to a strict interpretation of the drama, and contains many pages of great beauty. Those who have read Flaubert's powerful and imaginative work will probably consider it somewhat unsuited for the purposes of a "lyrical drama." It must be admitted, however, that the composer has found in it a subject well adapted to his artistic temperament, and that it has enabled him to produce a work which is an honour both to himself and to his country.

The production of "Salammbô" in London is an event much to be desired, and a revival of "Sigurd" would also be of the greatest

interest. Now that the British public are more familiarised with Wagner's "Nibelungen Ring" they would be able to draw interesting comparisons between the treatment of the same legend by the German master and the French composer.

If Reyer has acquired a well deserved reputation in France as a composer, he is equally well known as a writer on music, and for many years has occupied the post of critic to the *Journal des Débats*, formerly held by Berlioz.

The opinions advanced by Reyer have always been remarkable for sound common sense. An intimate friend and ardent admirer of Berlioz, he enjoys the credit of having been one of the first in France to recognise the genius of Wagner.

The perfect honesty of his convictions is apparent to those who read his writings with care, and it may in passing be noted to his honour that when the course of time and increased acquaintance with his subject have

caused him to modify any previously expressed opinions, he has never hesitated to say so. No one is infallible, but many pretend so to be.

When travelling in Germany in 1864 Reyer, who was already a strong admirer of Wagner's earlier works, had occasion to run through the score of "Tristan," then still unperformed. The first impressions produced upon him by this most complicated of scores was not a favourable one, and Reyer in stating this avowed that his admiration for the German master would stop at "Lohengrin," until the beauties of the "Nibelungen Ring" should have been revealed to him.

In 1884 when the first act of "Tristan" was given at one of Mons. Lamoureux's concerts, Reyer made amends for the appreciation somewhat hastily recorded by him twenty years previously by expressing his intense admiration for the wondrous beauties of this sublime work. "What a metamorphosis," he wrote, "had taken place in my musical fâculties during twenty years! But also what a difference in

the execution! It was the first time that I was hearing 'Tristan' with the orchestra."

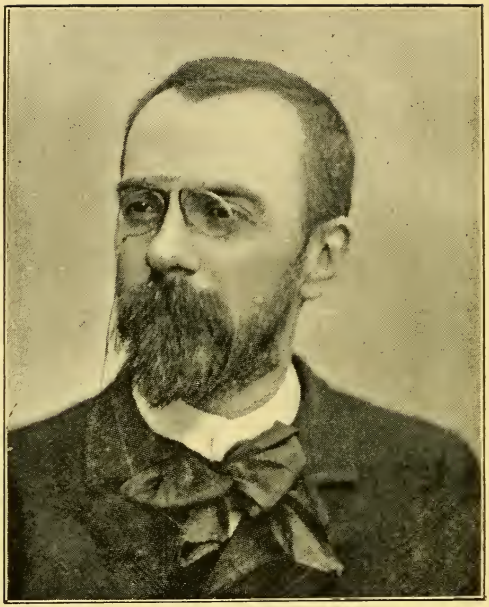
Reyer in his criticisms has always held up the banner of high art, and his writings will doubtless not have been without influence in determining the nature of the musical movement in France during these last few years. His admiration for Berlioz has not diminished, whilst his admiration for Wagner has increased. Apropos of the "Proserpine" of Saint-Saëns, he wrote: "We are practically all affected with Wagnerism, perhaps at different degrees; but we have drunk and we will drink at the same source, and the sole precaution for us to take is not to drown our own personality."

This frank avowal may not be to the taste of all French composers, but it is none the less true.

Ernest Reyer has almost entirely confined himself to operatic compositions. He is not a quick worker, and his operas all bear evidence of thought and an avoidance of claptrap effects.

He is still a bachelor and has the appearance

rather of a retired military officer than of the traditional musician. Reyer is *bibliothécaire* of the Opéra, and inhabits a quiet little apartment on a fifth floor, where he is able to work undisturbed and meditate upon the trials and uncertainties of a composer's existence.



Alfred Bruneau

ALFRED BRUNEAU

In the month of November 1891, there was brought out at Covent Garden Theatre a work that had the effect of setting the musical world of London into a state of ferment. This was "Le Rêve," a musical rendering of Emile Zola's well-known romance, by the composer whose name heads this chapter. The absolute unconventionality of the music, the boldness and the novelty of the composer's method, took the public by surprise and led to many a discussion, at the end of which both antagonists and supporters remained unconvinced and, as is generally the case, retained their own opinions.

. It has always appeared to me to be idle to attempt to impose one's ideas upon the relative merits of a composition on those whose disposi-

tion is antagonistic to its due appreciation. There are many to whom the later works of Wagner appear as a senseless agglomeration of notes, devoid of meaning and destitute of feeling, a mere jumble of sound. These people are doubtless absolutely sincere in their convictions. Where is the argument that would cause them to change their minds? If no sympathetic current is generated between the music and the listener, it may be taken for granted that these are not meant one for another, and all the arguments in the world will not alter the fact. On the other hand there can be no doubt that increased familiarity often causes the reversal of a previously expressed opinion, one sometimes formulated in undue haste, and this is especially the case with a work such as "Le Rêve," the tendencies of which are so novel and the methods so uncompromising in their thoroughness.

The composer has boldly flown in the face of recognised traditions and flung all compromise to the four winds. He has treated "Le Rêve"

according to his own ideas, careless as to whether these should be agreeable to the vocalist, who looks upon an opera solely as the means of displaying his voice; to the average amateur, whose fondness for a good square tune of doubtful originality is as great as ever; or to the musical pedant who gauges the value of an art-work according to the theoretical ideas of a past generation.

Art and literature have during the last few years been invaded by a strong current of realism. The marked tendency exhibited by the present generation of inquiring minutely into all matters and subjecting them to a searching process of analysis, has been pregnant in its results. The physiology of the mind appears to be the leading factor in the works of many of the lights of contemporary literature. This is discernible in the writings of poets like Swinburne and George Barlow, in the novels of Emile Zola and Alphonse Daudet, and in the studies of Tolstoï, to mention only a few. In music the same tendencies are apparent, and it

is rather the inner motives of the action than its outward details that the serious operatic composer is tempted to depict.

Bruneau exemplifies the latest phase of that evolution that has been taking place during recent years in the domain of dramatic music. It may be taken for granted that the theory enunciated by Gluck in his preface to "Alceste" more than a hundred years ago has now come to be universally adopted. This is, that "the true aim and object of dramatic music is to enhance the effect and situations of a poem, without interrupting the dramatic action or marring the effect by unnecessary ornamentation." It is this which forms the basis of Wagner's theories. There are, however, many other points of importance raised by the German master which practically amount to innovations. Of these none has perhaps a greater bearing on the construction of the "lyrical drama" of the future than the employment of *leit-motiven*, or representative themes.

It has been argued that Wagner can scarcely

claim to be the actual inventor of this device.

To this it may be replied that Wagner's method differs essentially from that followed by any of his predecessors. The bare repetition of a phrase previously heard may be dramatically significant, but it only represents the Wagnerian idea in its most embryonic form, and has little in common with a system subject to which an entire opera is constructed upon a certain number of themes susceptible of being modified and transformed according to the sentiments expressed by the words. Whatever objections may be adduced against such a system if pushed to its furthest limits and adopted as rigorously as Wagner has in his later "music dramas," it must be conceded that it opens a large field to the composer and adds a powerful element of interest to the musical exposition of a plot.

So far, French composers who have profited by Wagner's many innovations have shown themselves shy in following the master in this

particular one. Some of them have, it is true, adopted it to a certain extent, and endeavoured to effect a compromise by trying at the same time to retain set pieces of the kind associated with the older forms of opera. Saint-Saëns in "Henri VIII." and "Ascanio," Massenet in "Esclarmonde," to name only two, have exhibited a marked tendency in this direction, It has, however, been reserved for Alfred Bruneau to employ the Wagnerian plan in a more complete way than any French composer has yet done. I am not here venturing to express an opinion as to whether or not the total absence of set form in an opera is advisable. It is evidently quite possible to compose a "lyrical drama" on a different plan than one entailing the strict employment of representative themes. Art should comprise every method that is likely to add to its scope, and the use of *leit-motiven* opens a vista of illimitable possibilities to the composer of the future. It is a powerful agent of dramatic expression, and one which requires musical ability of a very high

order if it is to be employed in any profitable manner. When I mention Alfred Bruneau as being perhaps the first French composer who has applied the Wagnerian system so thoroughly in his "lyrical dramas," it must not be implied that he is in any way a servile imitator of the German master, and he must not be confounded with composers who, having no original ideas of their own, trade upon those of other people. As his friend and collaborator Mons. Louis Gallet remarks in his *Notes d'un Librettiste*, "Son criterium est tout personel." There is one point, for instance, in which he diverges entirely from Wagner. This is in his choice of subjects. Instead of searching for inspiration in the legendary lore so dear to the composer of "Tristan," Bruneau prefers to musically illustrate a story of modern life. His ideas upon the lyrical drama are best expressed in his own words, and I do not scruple to reproduce the following passage from a letter addressed to myself: "Je suis pour l'union aussi intime que possible de la musique et des paroles, et

voudrais faire du théâtre vivant, humain et bref. J'aurais aussi l'ambition de traiter une suite de sujets essentiellement Français et modernes d'action comme de sentiments. C'est pourquoi, après 'Le Rêve,' d'un mysticisme bien Français je crois, viendra 'L'Attaque du moulin,' drame pris au cœur saignant de notre pays. Mais la suite n'est qu'un projet que je n'aurai peut-être jamais la force de mettre à exécution."

It is the human element that predominates in Bruneau's compositions which constitutes so powerful a fascination to those who are in sympathy with his ideas. His music is not theatrical in the ordinary acceptation of the term but intensely dramatic, inasmuch as it aims at depicting the innermost details of the action, and describes in searching accents the varied emotions of the leading characters.

He has been blamed for his disregard of the so-called rules of harmony, and for apparently revelling in the employment of discords, strange progressions, and harsh modulations. Let it be

remembered that there is scarcely a composer of eminence who has not been subjected to the same reproach. To take a few of the most notable instances, it is only necessary to mention the cases of Schumann, Wagner, Berlioz, and Bizet. A name that may carry conviction even further is that of Beethoven. Is it not a fact that within the memory of some who are still amongst us, the "Choral Symphony" was stigmatised as the work of a genius whose powers were on the wane, and this mighty work was pronounced dull and incoherent?

The question as to how far a composer may go in his search after novel effects, and what discords he may or may not employ, is one that cannot easily be answered. Where is the musician who will have the presumption to erect himself as the supreme arbiter upon so complex a question, and venture to say to the composer, "Thus far shalt thou go and no further?"

Undoubtedly there must be rules of some kind, but these are intended for the student and are not meant to hamper the inspiration of the

master. In order to explain my meaning I cannot do better than quote the following extract from the preface of Mr. Ebenezer Prout's admirable work on "Harmony,"* which conclusively disposes of the question:

"The principle must surely be wrong which places the rules of an early stage of musical development above the inspirations of genius! Haydn, when asked according to what rules he had introduced a certain harmony, replied that 'The rules were all his very obedient humble servants;' and when we find that in our own time Wagner, or Brahms, or Dvórak, breaks some rule given in old text books, there is, to say the least, a very strong presumption, not that the composer is wrong, but that the rule needs modifying. In other words practice must precede theory. The inspired composer goes first, and invents new effects; it is the business of the theorist not to cavil at every novelty, but to follow modestly behind, and make his rules conform to the practice of the master."

* Published by Messrs. Augener.

These are golden words, involving a precept that should be seriously taken to heart by those who are inclined to pass a hasty verdict upon works exhibiting tendencies of a novel nature. At the same time it does not follow that composers of inferior talent should be allowed a liberty which with them often degenerates into licence, and imagine that it is only necessary for them to stud their scores with consecutive fifths and octaves, and avoid any but the most out-of-the-way modulations in order at once to be ranked as men of genius. There is a vast amount of difference between the crude harmonies, obviously introduced for effect, that occur in the scores of some composers, and those employed with a due sense of dramatic fitness by a musician like Bruneau.

The composer of "Le Rêve" was born on the 1st of March 1857. He is, therefore, at the present time in the full flush of his creative ability, and his powers of production have doubtless not yet reached their full maturity of expression. There is no knowing how far

a musician of his calibre may not eventually go, or what works he may be destined to produce. Up to the present he has shown a wonderful amount of independence of thought, and his very exaggerations are the evident outcome of a consistent striving to attain an elevated ideal.

Alfred Bruneau's musical studies were begun in a brilliant manner at the Paris Conservatoire, where he obtained the first prize for violoncello in 1876. He entered into the composition class, presided over by Massenet, and finally, in 1881, triumphantly carried off the "Prix de Rome." This was already a great step towards fame and fortune, although it has been proved over and over again that it leads to neither. Many an old winner of the "Prix de Rome" has, after a fruitless struggle, been compelled to give up the game and resign himself to a life of comparative obscurity. For an artist to remain true to his convictions and resist the temptations thrown in his way of obtaining an ephemeral popularity by pandering to the taste of the public, is not always so easy an achievement

as it may appear. It was through the means of the concert-room that Alfred Bruneau's name first became known to the musical public of Paris. An "Ouverture Héroïque," a symphonic poem entitled "La Belle au bois dormant," and "Léda," styled a "poème antique;" these works were played at different times, and sufficed to stamp their author as a musician of undeniable capacity and distinct promise. "Penthésilée" is the name of a symphonic poem of great daring and originality for a solo voice and orchestra, which was only recently produced at one of Mons. Colonne's concerts. It is a musical interpretation of some wild and striking stanzas by the poet Catulle Mendès. Thoroughly independent in structure as it is in its workmanship, bold almost to excess, distinguished by a most unconventional harmonic treatment, this composition exhibits a masterly grip that irresistibly commands attention. The interest may be said to be mainly concentrated in the orchestra, the voice part being strictly declamatory.

It is, however, through his conception of the "lyrical drama" that Bruneau especially asserts his individuality.

"Kérim," his first stage work, brought out in 1887 at the Théâtre du Chateau d'Eau, provisionally given up to operatic performances, does not appear to have excited much attention, possibly owing to the inadequacy of the interpretation. In this work, the tendencies which are so accentuated in "Le Rêve" are already foreshadowed. There is but little in this interesting score that denotes the beginner, and "Kérim" is distinguished by qualities for which we may search in vain through the pages of many works that have acquired a greater popularity. For some reason hard to assign, operas dealing with Eastern subjects do not seem to appeal readily to the taste of the public, at any rate in England. And yet what delightful musical impressions are evoked by the recollection of works such as Goldmark's "Queen of Sheba," Cornelius' "Barber of Bagdad," Bizet's "Djamileh" and others! It may be remarked

en passant that the fact of the first of these works being practically unknown on this side of the channel scarcely redounds to our credit.

From the very first page of "Kérim," it becomes evident that we are in the presence of a composer who has something new to say and who intends to say it whether or not it pleases the musical faculty or those who measure the value of a work according to a preconceived standard.

In the matter of harmonic boldness Bruneau goes to very great lengths, and from this point of view alone the score of "Kérim" will prove highly interesting to musicians. The plan upon which he works is admirably logical. He commences by exposing some of his most important themes in their simplest guise, so that they may in a way impose themselves upon the attention of the listener. These are then subjected to various transformations according to the sense of the words they are intended to interpret, and are heard in different forms, either

singly or jointly, being employed in combination when the composer has in view the expression of some complex sentiment. It is this system, which in a more embryonic form is apparent in "Kérim," that constitutes the constructive basis of "Le Rêve."

The first of these works, which is termed an opera, but has more of the characteristics of the lyrical drama, treats of an Eastern legend.

An emir of Beyrouth (nothing in common with Baireuth!), is in love with an unknown maiden who appears to him in his sleep and tells him that she will belong to him if he finds her some tears that are the outcome of a truly suffering heart. These will then be turned into pearls which he can offer her. The emir pursues his quest far and wide without success, and finally himself bursts into tears which are suddenly transformed into pearls. The object of his thoughts then appears and tells him that he has found what she required, and that the tears produced by genuine love have won her as his own.

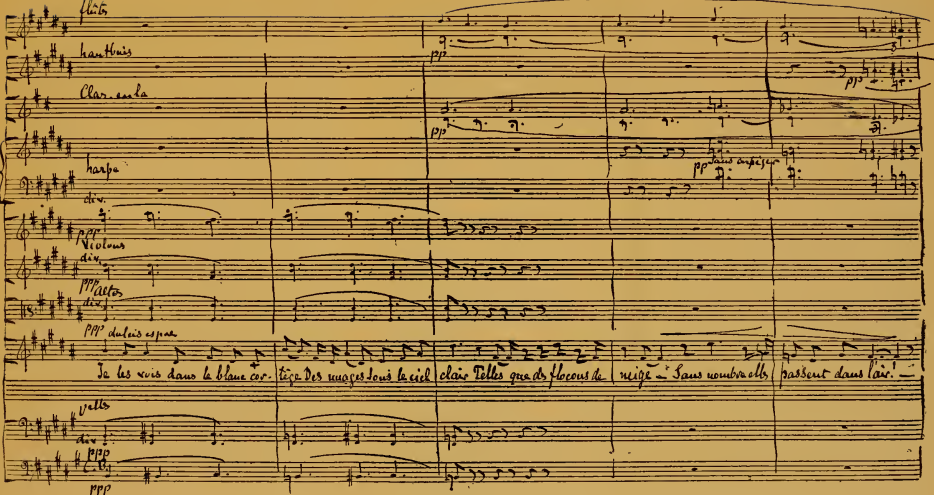
It can scarcely be said that the above story offers material of a particular interesting order. It has, however, been sufficient to furnish Bruneau with the opportunity of exercising his skill and displaying his fancy often to great advantage. Before taking leave of "Kérim" I may point out, for the benefit of those who might experience the curiosity of perusing this score, the monologue for tenor in the first act with its delightful accompaniment in canon, the effective treatment of some popular Oriental tunes, and specially the consistent working out of the representative themes. I must also mention the delicious "Adagietto," sung by the heroine in the last act, as an example of simple and pure melody.

There are certain legends that require a long time before they are dispelled, and the accusation that for a considerable while hung over the heads of Wagner and Berlioz of being deficient in melodic power, has been levelled against many other composers. Bruneau has not escaped it, but he may console himself with the

thought that he is in very good company. It is I think Liszt who invented the excellent definition of a species of melody "à plusieurs étages," which it is not given to every one to grasp.

We now come to the work that has been instrumental in bringing the name of Bruneau to the front in a prominent manner. If "Le Rêve," which was first played at the Paris Opéra Comique in 1891, has given rise to much controversy, it has at any rate not been passed by in silence or damned with faint praise.

The mysticism and poetical charm of Zola's book, so different to the majority of novels by the apostle of realism, has caused it to be widely appreciated even in circles where his romances are not usually admitted. Bruneau's desire originally had been to write a "lyrical drama" upon "La Faute de l'abbé Mouret." It was only when he found that Massenet had chosen the same subject that he was forced to give up the idea and turn his attention to "Le Rêve." I am not aware whether Massenet has abandoned his intention of turning "La Faute



FACSIMILE OF AUTOGRAPH SCORE OF "LE RÊVE"

Act I.

de l'abbé Mouret" into an opera or not. Now that composers appear bent upon introducing realism into their music, it is not impossible that even "L'Assommoir" may eventually serve as the groundwork of an operatic textbook. We trust that this will not be so. However realistic musicians may strive to be, they should not associate their muse with themes that are not susceptible of being idealised.

The desire nowadays of musically photographing, if I may employ a somewhat far-fetched comparison, certain types of humanity is excellent in its way. But it is as well in so doing to choose a period remote from ours, where no sense of incongruity can be produced through the appearance of operatic characters clad in the prosaic garb of the present day. The general characteristics of humanity have always been the same, and Wagner, with his marvellous poetical insight, knew well what he was about when he drew the subjects of his "music dramas" from mythical sources.

In "Le Rêve" Bruneau has written a work

remarkable in point of originality and sustained expression. His music must be either accepted in its entirety or rejected altogether. Upon those who appreciate its beauties it exercises an irresistible fascination. Bruneau is a psychologist, and he aims at musically describing the innermost feelings of the soul. He has also in "Le Rêve" proved himself to be an idealist.

I will in a few words endeavour to sketch the subject-matter of this admirable work.

Angélique is a young girl, the adopted child of a respectable old couple, embroiderers by trade. She is subject to hallucinations, and through constantly reading a book entitled "The Golden Legend," dealing with the lives of saints and martyrs, fancies she hears voices in the air, and dreams of the arrival of a prince who will come and carry her off. As the first scene closes, she imagines she sees the one she has been dreaming of, who turns out to be the son of the Bishop Jean d'Hautecœur, still sorrowing for the wife he lost many years ago. It stands to reason that the two young people fall in love with one

another, and that the course of their love, according to the usual precedent, does not run smooth. The bishop intends his son to become a priest and refuses to consent to his marriage, remaining deaf to his entreaties. Angélique thereupon pines away and is on the point of death, when her lover finally induces his father to give in, and save her by performing a miracle such as was accomplished by his ancestor, who cured the sufferers of a plague by kissing them on the forehead and using the words, "Si Dieu veut, je veux," which have since become the motto of his family. The Bishop yields and performs the miracle. The lovers are about to be united, but at the very porch of the church where they are to be married, Angélique hears voices in the air calling to her, she staggers, and dies. This last scene was omitted at Covent Garden.

As I have previously remarked, "Le Rêve" is constructed entirely upon a number of representative themes. There is a practically complete absence of set pieces, the work running its

course uninterruptedly without a break. Bruneau has in fact treated his setting of Zola's book in a form that might be best described as "speech in song" accompanied by an orchestral commentary. It is doubtful though whether the word "accompany" can be used at all in connection with his music, seeing that the most important part is allotted to the orchestra. The themes employed are most impressive, thoroughly characteristic, and well adapted for polyphonic treatment. There are certain scenes in which the melodic interest lies mainly in the voice parts, although the instrumental portion is invariably pregnant with suggestion, fragments of motives being blended together and worked in with consummate skill. Angélique's appeal to the Bishop is one of these, and is marked by genuine dramatic feeling. One of the most strikingly original scenes is the one comprising the Bishop's monologue. The poignant accents are admirably fitted to describe the emotions of one whose life has been blighted through the loss of the woman he loved, and whose determination to force his son into the

priesthood is shaken by the affection he bears him.

Pages such as these are sufficient in themselves to stamp their author as an artist of the first rank and a musician of genius.

The chorus occupies but a small place in "Le Rêve," and the choristers are never seen upon the stage. A few bars for the sopranos, supposed to represent the voices in the air heard by Angélique, an "Ave verum," sung in the cathedral, and an old French hymn heard in the distance sung as a procession is passing underneath the windows, represent the choral numbers.

At the commencement of the second scene we have a lively dance to an old French tune. In this place I think the effect would have been greatly enhanced by the adjunction of voices to the orchestra. This would have been æsthetically correct, as there is a certain incongruity in the fact of a number of young girls dancing and apparently enjoying themselves in silence.

I would draw attention to the admirable

delineation of the dear old embroiderers, as kindly a couple as could well be imagined, a creation that Dickens might well envy, whose characteristics have been musically transcribed by Bruneau in accents so suave and so touching.

The composer of "Le Rêve" possesses the sense of contrast to a very high degree. Witness the manner in which he has set the following words when the Bishop describes how his motto, "Si Dieu veut, je veux!" came to be adopted by his family:

"Pendant une peste cruelle,
Il pria tant que Dieu le fit vainqueur
Du terrible fléau.—Pour ramener la vie
Aux corps déjà glacés par l'agonie,
Il se penchait vers eux,
Les baisait sur la bouche et n'avait rien qu'à dire
Aux mourants: 'Si Dieu veut, je veux!'
On voyait les mourants sourire;
Car, dès qu'il les touchait des lèvres seulement,
*Les malades étaient guéris soudainement."**

* A special word of praise must here be accorded to Mons. Louis Gallet, the author of the book, whose version of Zola's romance is eminently poetical.

The part dealing with the description of the plague is accompanied by a strange and gruesome succession of chords, which gradually leads to a lovely melody typical of the miracle that is supposed to have been worked. Nothing can be more appropriate than the strains that accompany the above words to which they appear intimately allied.

When "Le Rêve" was given at Covent Garden it was accorded a well-nigh perfect rendering. Mdlle. Simonnet realised the character of Angélique to the life, and imparted an infinity of charm to the music. The part of the Bishop furnished Mons. Bouvet with the opportunity of presenting an admirable character study. The remaining parts were exceptionally well performed by Mdme. Deschamps-Jéhin, and Messrs. Engel and Lorrain. A better *ensemble* it would be difficult to imagine. The orchestra was conducted by Mons. Jéhin.

Like so many other composers, Alfred Bruneau is also a musical critic, and has succeeded

the late Victor Wilder in that capacity upon the *Gil Blas.*

Victor Wilder was ever one of the strongest advocates of Wagner on the Parisian press, and it is to him that are due the excellent translations into French of the master's later music dramas.

It may be interesting to my readers to peruse a specimen of Bruneau's writing, and I will therefore cite an extract from an article he lately wrote concerning the first performance of the "Walküre" in Paris, in which he lucidly defines the difference existing between the old-fashioned opera and the "lyrical drama." I must apologise if my translation fails to do justice to the original.

"It is not only the independence of music (*l'indépendence des sons*) that we owe to Richard Wagner. Owing to his prodigious genius, the musical drama has entered into a new era, an era of true reason, of rigorous good sense and of perfect logic. No one nowadays is unaware of the profound dissimilarity existing

between the 'lyrical drama' and the opera. In the one, the music unites itself intimately to the poetry in order to impart life, movement, passionate interest to a human action, the course of which must run uninterruptedly from the rising of the curtain to the last scene.

"In the other, the music is divided into a number of pieces which are occasionally nothing but cumbersome *hors d'œuvres*, the traditional form of which hampers the action of actors and choristers contrary to the most elementary scenic necessities.

"In the one, the symphony comments upon the inward thoughts of the different characters, makes known the reasons that cause them to act, and whilst depicting their natures, magically evokes before our eyes the subtle and fabulous scenes dreamed of by our fancy.

"In the other, with a singular docility, the orchestra submits itself to the slavery of the voice. Its function, which is absolutely secondary, consists in accompanying the voices, in playing *ritournelles*, in striking a few chords

during which the recitatives are being declaimed, and in more or less harmoniously accompanying the entries and exits.

"Alone the overture is reserved; and even this often serves but as a pretext for the composition of a piece of instrumental display rather than as a description of sentiments and facts.

"In the one, the melody is infinite, as Richard Wagner has rightly expressed it; it goes and comes, moves from the voices to the orchestra, ever renewing itself in the freedom of its flight.

"In the other, it appears only in certain places: if the vocal portion is melodious, the accompaniment is rudimentary and the traditional recitative endlessly intervening in the middle of the music in order to divide it into set forms, arbitrarily condemns melody to submit to wretched formulas and snatches away its wings."

In the course of the same article, Bruneau expresses himself thus:

"These are, however, terms imagined rather for the purpose of defending certain ideas

than for designating certain works, as there exist in the classical form of opera masterpieces worthy of eternal and fervent admiration. One does not necessarily run down works such as 'Don Juan,' 'Fidelio,' 'Iphigénie,' and so many others in desiring the rejuvenescence of an art that owes to these masterpieces its imperishable glory.

"After Gluck, Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner, fresh innovators will come, who, respectful of the traditions of the past and eager for the conquests of the future, will still further enlarge the field of action of the musical drama."

The above words may be taken in a measure as furnishing Bruneau's profession of faith as regards matters operatic. He has finished the score of a new "lyrical drama" entitled "L'Attaque du Moulin," founded upon a tale of Zola, which at the time I am writing has not yet been performed. It is to be produced shortly at the Paris Opéra Comique Theatre.

I must not fail to allude to Bruneau's characteristic settings of Catulle Mendès' "Lieds

de France," which are distinguished by an evidently studied simplicity of expression.

Unless I am mistaken, it was the late Victor Wilder, his predecessor on the *Gil Blas* who once alluded to the composer of "Le Rêve" as "the standard-bearer of the young French school," a qualification to which he is, in my humble estimation, well entitled.

NOTE.—Since this volume has gone to press, "L'Attaque du Moulin" has been produced at the Paris Opéra Comique, with great success.

SOME OTHER FRENCH COMPOSERS

It may with truth be averred that France has never been so well provided with composers of talent as she is at the present time. Every year the far-famed Conservatoire turns out a number of young men whose musical knowledge is undeniable, and who are all of them filled with buoyant hopes of achieving distinction in the arena of fame. The musical progress that has been effected in France during the last thirty years is immense. This may be largely attributed to the initiative of Pasdeloup * the organiser and conductor of the celebrated concerts which were started at the Cirque d'Hiver in 1861, and to the zeal and talent of

* Jules Pasdeloup, born 1819, died 1887.

his successors Messrs. Lamoureux and Colonne. It is through the efforts of the above indefatigable *chefs d'orchestre* that instrumental music of a high class has come to be generally appreciated in Paris. The famous Conservatoire concerts, it must be remembered, were, and are, only accessible to a few privileged individuals.

Pasdeloup began his work by familiarising the Parisians with the symphonic works of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. Mendelssohn and Schumann followed, and the valiant *chef d'orchestre* from time to time introduced the names of Berlioz and Wagner. The appearance of the latter on the programme generally foreshadowed a disturbance. Nowadays, when we witness the spectacle of large crowds listening in wrapt attention to some of the most complicated works of the great master at the concerts of Messrs. Lamoureux and Colonne, it seems difficult to realise the possibility of such turbulent scenes as I remember myself witnessing only a few years since at the Pasdeloup con-

certs. On one occasion a performance of the Prelude to "Lohengrin" produced a veritable disturbance, one section of the audience desiring to hear it over again in spite of the manifest opposition displayed by the major portion of the spectators. Pasdeloup adopted the sensible course of making an impromptu speech, in which he said that as many people wished to hear the Prelude once more he would repeat it at the end of the concert, when those who objected to it would be at liberty to retire. By thus severing the Gordian knot the clever *chef d'orchestre* effectually disposed of the difficulty to the manifest disappointment of the anti-Wagnerites present.

The members of the younger generation of French composers have had no cause to complain of any want of hospitality at the hands of either Pasdeloup or Messrs. Lamoureux* and Colonne,† and many a now well-known musician has won his spurs through their help.

It would almost appear as if a veil which for

* Lamoureux, b. 1834. † Colonne, b. 1838.

a long period had obscured the vision of the musical section of the public had at length been removed. The genius of Berlioz and that of Wagner are now uncontested, unless it be by a few retrograde individuals whose opinions are not entitled to any weight, and the influence of these masters upon the modern French school has been both great and far-reaching. It is highly regrettable that the spirit of free trade is not acted upon to a greater extent in the matter of musical affairs. If this were the case we should be afforded more chances of becoming acquainted with the works of those members of the young, and if I may so term it, militant French school, which are not sufficiently known on this side of the channel.

In like manner, our native composers might be given the opportunity of proving to the Parisians the fallacy of the notion, seemingly entertained abroad, that England is destitute of creative musical talent. Art has not, or ought not to have, any boundaries. That which is

good deserves to be known and to survive; as for the rest, it matters not.

In music, time seems to march with disconcerting rapidity. Composers who but a few years since were considered as hopelessly advanced in their ideas are now in danger of being left behind by their juniors.

One of the most ardent champions of the new school of thought some years ago was Victorin Joncières, who enjoys a well-established reputation in Paris as composer and critic.

Born in 1839, this artist is the author of several operas denoting aptitudes of no mean order, although devoid of any distinctive originality. Passing by such early works as "Sardanapale" (1867), and "Le dernier jour de Pompei" (1869), we come to "Dimitri," which contains several good numbers, "La Reine Berthe" (1878), and "Le Chevalier Jean" (1885). This last work has been played in Germany with success under the title of "Johann von Löthringen." "Dimitri" and "Le Chevalier Jean"

may be looked upon as the composer's best operas.

The influence of Wagner's earlier style is very apparent in these works. Mons. Joncières is also the author of an interesting "Symphonie Romantique." As a critic he has done much to aid the cause of Wagner in France, although not going to the length of some of the master's thick and thin admirers.

A musician of a different type is Théodore Dubois, born in 1837. This composer, like his friend Camille Saint-Saëns, whom he succeeded as organist at the Madeleine, has written a great deal and attempted a variety of *genres*. Amongst his works it will be sufficient to mention the opera "Aben Hamet," the ballet "La Farandole," the concert overture "Frithjoff," "Paradise Lost," an oratorio which gained the prize offered by the city of Paris in 1878, and his setting of the "Seven Words of the Cross" (1867).

Besides these, Théodore Dubois, who won the "Prix de Rome" in 1861, is the author of

a number of orchestral works, piano music, and religious compositions which denote talent of an uncommon order and exhibit qualities that entitle him to occupy an important place amongst contemporary musicians.

Another composer whose name is better known in England, and who has also achieved distinction as an organist, is Charles Marie Widor, born in 1845, several of whose compositions have been heard at the Philharmonic and Crystal Palace Concerts. This composer has given proof of a considerable amount of versatility in his different contributions to orchestral and chamber music, also in his charming ballet "La Korrigane." His opera "Maître Ambros" did not meet with success. He has also written a quantity of excellent piano music and many songs. There is imagination and skill displayed in Widor's compositions, and much may yet be expected from him.

If the name of Widor is known in England, the same may be said of Benjamin Godard, born in 1849, in whom we have one of

the most prolific of the younger generation of French composers. Godard exhibits a decided individuality of his own. He is endowed with an extraordinary facility of production, and is, in fact, apt to err on the side of over-productivity, and to spread his talents over too large an area. His dramatic poem "Le Tasse," which won the prize offered by the city of Paris in 1879, is a work of considerable importance, revealing an undoubted personality.

With his operas "Pedro de Zalamea," "Jocelyn," "Dante," Godard has been less successful. It is in works such as the "Concerto Romantique" for violin, the "Symphonie Légendaire," the piano trio, amongst others, that his talent finds its true expression. The composer of these works is in the full force of his powers, and it is not too much to state the belief that he has yet much to say. Godard is perhaps greater in small things than he is in large. There is an exquisite charm in some of his songs such as "Ninon," and "Te souviens tu," whilst

many of his piano pieces have a savour all their own.

Emile Paladhile, born in 1844, is the composer of the famous "Mandolinata," which has been warbled by every vocalist all the world over. This single melody has probably done more to render his name popular than all his other works put together. His opera "Patrie" has met with success in Paris. Amongst his other dramatic works may be mentioned "Le Passant," "L'Amour Africain," and "Suzanne."

Some composers are doomed to wait a long while before an opportunity is offered them of obtaining a hearing. Such has not been the case with Gervais Bernard Salvayre, born in 1847, who has had several operas performed, without, however, so far scoring any great success.

His first opera, "Le Bravo" played in 1877, was favourably received, but none of his later works, "Egmont," "Richard III.," or "La Dame de Monsoreaux," have succeeded in

maintaining themselves in the *répertoire*. The second of these, unless I am mistaken, was first produced in St. Petersburg, and the last at the Paris Opéra, where it was a complete *fiasco*. This composer is also the author of a ballet entitled "La Fandango," a "Stabat Mater," and several other works, including a graceful "Air varié" for stringed instruments.

As the dimensions of this volume are restricted, I am unable to do more than draw attention to some composers whose works would merit more than a cursory mention. Amongst these I may name the erudite Bourgault-Ducoudray, Lenepveu, whose opera "Velléda" was brought out in London some years ago with Mme. Patti in the principal part, Henri Maréchal, the brothers Hillemacher, joint composers of a remarkable opera founded on Dumas' "Henri III.," Wormser, author of "L'Enfant Prodigue," Diaz, Pierné, Pessard, Pfeiffer, Mdlle. Chaminade, Lefebvre, Véronge de la Nux, Cahen, and Messager. This last composer's name is well known in London, where his

delightful opera "La Basoche" was successfully performed at the English Opera House, now given up to that form of art, the variety entertainment, so dear to the British public.

The music he has lately composed to Loti's "Madame Chrysanthème" will surely add much to his reputation. It is full of refinement and charm.

We now come to an interesting group of composers who are understood to represent musical ideas of a more "advanced" kind. Some of these are pupils of the late César Franck, and have been humorously designated as forming part of "La République Franckaise."

It may here be said that the almost absolute ignorance existing in England as regards the compositions of so eminent a musician as César Franck does not redound to our credit. Surely it would be worth the while of our choral societies to produce a work so remarkable in every way as "Les Béatitudes," and a place might occasionally be found in our concert programmes for some example of his chamber

music. His fine violin sonata was recently played at the St. James's Hall by Mme. Frickenhaus and Mons. Ortmans, and great credit is thereby due to both these artists, who have shown an example that might with advantage be followed.

There exists a certain "Prélude, Choral et Fugue," for the piano, published by Messrs. Enoch, that I can confidently recommend to the notice of musicians, who will find therein the expression of a strong, deep, and noble talent.

Vincent d'Indy, one of César Franck's best pupils, is equally little known in England, except by name. Born in 1852, this composer has produced a number of works, the value of which has caused him to be regarded as one of the most earnest and promising amongst the younger French musicians, as well as one of those who consider their art as sacred, and do not seek the suffrages of the masses, but are content with gaining the approval of a select few.

The entire modern French school is strongly tinged with Wagnerism, but the essentially Teutonic nature of Brahms would seem to render his style absolutely uncongenial to a French mind. According to Mons. Hugues Imbert, the impression caused upon Vincent d'Indy by the perusal of Brahms' "Requiem," in 1873, was such that he forthwith started for Germany in order to become acquainted with the master. He first sought him in Vienna, then at Munich, and finally came across him at the Starnberger See, in Bavaria. The result of the long-desired interview does not seem to have been so satisfactory as it might have been, the German composer receiving the young enthusiast with a certain amount of reserve.

The first work by Vincent d'Indy which was given in Paris was the overture to the "Piccolomini," which forms the second part of Schiller's trilogy of "Wallenstein." This took place in 1875. It was not until five years later that he terminated his symphony bearing the title of "Wallenstein," a composi-

tion conceived upon a large scale, displaying a marked capacity in the handling of the orchestra, and revealing symphonic aptitudes of a high order.

Perhaps the most remarkable work that Vincent d'Indy has as yet produced is his dramatic legend "Le Chant de la Cloche," op. 18, the words of which are adapted from Schiller's well-known poem. This composition was awarded the prize offered by the city of Paris in 1886. The predominating influence in this work is that of Wagner. Perhaps somewhat unduly complicated in the matter of detail, the score is remarkable as an example of consummate workmanship and as an evidence of the lofty aspirations and elevated ideas held by its author. I must not omit to mention the Symphony in G for piano and orchestra, op. 25, which has the merit of decided originality in the matter of structure. It is divided into three parts, and is mainly constructed upon a French popular melody, which is subjected to a variety of transformations. So far, his

only contribution to the stage consists in a one-act opera, entitled "Attendez moi sous l'Orme," played some ten or twelve years since at the Opéra Comique.

Vincent d'Indy is essentially a symphonist, and the same may be said of Gabriel Fauré, whose talent and originality English audiences have occasionally had an opportunity of appreciating. The *habitués* of the Monday Popular Concerts will not have forgotten a certain quartet played at these exclusive gatherings a year or two ago, and amateurs may recollect the brilliant violin sonata which Saint-Saëns introduced on the occasion of one of his last visits amongst us. Every violinist plays, or ought to play, his delicious "Berceuse."

Fauré, who was born in 1845, has written works of high musical value, such as the quartet above mentioned, the violin concerto, op. 14, and the symphony in D minor, op. 40. Many admirable songs and a large number of pianoforte works are also due to his pen.

Mons. Hugues Imbert commences his interesting notice of the composer, included in his "Profils de Musiciens," with the following words: "If there be a French musician who by temperament and taste has left the French school in order to approach the German symphonic school; if there be a composer who has the profoundest respect for his art, who loves it with his whole soul; if there be a man who despises self-advertisement, and is averse to all concessions in favour of the doubtful taste of the public, it is Gabriel Fauré."

Whilst agreeing with the measure of praise allotted to the composer in the above lines, and recognising the influence of German music discernible in his works, I am of opinion that his nationality is perhaps more marked than his biographer would seem to imagine.

The nature of Fauré's talent has been appreciated by Mons. Camille Benoit in these terms: "Fauré's talent has especially manifested itself in 'La Musique Intime,' that which one hears in an artist's salon or at a concert of chamber

music, that which wants neither scenery nor orchestra. From all points of view, if I had to liken him to a contemporary foreign composer, it is to the Norwegian, Eduard Grieg, that I should compare him. That is to say, that in France, G. Fauré is the first in the special line he has chosen, and towards which his nature has impelled him."

I now come to a composer who has only comparatively recently made a name. Emmanuel Chabrier was born in 1842, and commenced his musical career somewhat late in life. Always a musical enthusiast, and having found time to cultivate his favourite art as a pastime, he threw up an administrative appointment in 1879, and resolved to devote himself entirely to composition. Two years previously he had written an "opéra bouffe," entitled "L'Etoile," which was played at the Bouffes Parisiens. It was not, however, in this style that he was destined to shine. Very different is "Gwendoline," an opera performed for the first time in 1886 at Brussels with great success, and which

has since been given in Germany, notably at Carlsruhe and Munich, and is, I believe, shortly to be mounted in Paris. Highly imaginative and poetical, this work must undoubtedly rank amongst the best operas that have emanated from the brain of a French composer for many years. The intense admiration that Chabrier entertains towards Wagner has not obscured the individuality of his own musical ideas. Ernest Reyer wrote an extremely eulogistic article on this work, from which I will cite an extract:—"Je me trouve en présence d'une œuvre extrêmement intéressante, renfermant des pages superbes et qui dans ses parties les moins saillantes, porte quand même la griffe puissante d'un compositeur admirablement doué."

For some reason, which I do not pretend to fathom, Chabrier has introduced a popular Irish melody into his score!

In "Le Roi Malgré Lui," played at the Opéra Comique in 1887, Chabrier has attempted a different style. This pleasing work is especially

striking through the ingenuity of the orchestral treatment, which often redeems the occasional *banalité* of its themes. It is altogether a delightful example of a modernised form of "opéra comique," and had reached its third representation when the luckless "Opéra Comique" Theatre was burnt to the ground. The orchestral rhapsody "España," constructed upon Spanish melodies, brimful of *entrain* and scored with a wonderful lightness of touch, has largely contributed to popularise the name of Chabrier in the concert room. There is both fancy and originality in the "Pièces Pittoresques" for piano, published by Messrs. Enoch in the Litolff edition. Chabrier is said to be at work upon an opera entitled "Briseis."

I must not pass over in silence composers such as Arthur Coquard, Mdlle. Augusta Holmès, a lady of extraordinary talent, some say genius, Vidal, Chapuis, Hue, Camille Benoit, Marty, Henri Duparc, and Gustave Charpentier, one of the youngest and not the least gifted.

With these few lines concerning some of the most remarkable amongst living French composers, I must take leave of my readers. That France will yet produce works destined to keep up and further enhance her prestige there can be no doubt. The essentially dramatic temperament of her composers will continue to assert itself, and it is highly unlikely that they will allow themselves to fall into the exaggerations of any particular system.

If during the first half of the century the influence of Rossini has been predominant, that of Wagner has been at least equally so during the latter portion. In either case, French composers have taken as much from each master as would amalgamate with their individuality without abrogating that national element which is so recognisable in their productions.

Truth of expression and dramatic characterisation are now universally sought for by operatic composers. Whether these are attained through the employment of one method or another

matters but little. A composer is no more bound to construct an opera upon a number of representative themes than he is to reject all set forms. If his inspiration prompts him to compose in one particular style, by all means let him do so, provided he be sincere, and that his music bears the stamp of conviction. Musicians are apt to be too exclusive in their tastes. It should be possible to entertain preferences without necessarily condemning everything that does not come within the radius of one's ideas. The French school has, during this century, left its mark in an undeniable manner upon operatic history, and the versatility of its composers has over and over again been proved.

Casting a cursory glance backwards, do we not find, side by side with a work of such severely classic proportions, noble aspirations, yet simple construction as Méhul's "Joseph," bright specimens of the "opéra comique," like Boïeldieu's "Dame Blanche," Hérold's "Pré aux Clercs," Auber's "Fra Diavolo," and

"Domino Noir"? The Grand Opéra stage is enriched by works so full of natural spontaneity as Auber's "Muette de Portici," and of dramatic power as Halévy's "La Juive." Later on, Berlioz revolutionises orchestral methods whilst raising the ideal previously aimed at, Gounod adds an elegiac note and an intensity of poetical feeling to the characteristics of his nation, and Bizet gives evidence of a genius unhappily too soon cut short, and prepares the way for the realistic operatic style now so much in vogue. "Faust," "Mignon," "Carmen," "Manon," "Samson et Dalila," and other operas acquire a European fame, whilst the younger French composers are impatiently waiting for the opportunity to vie with their elders.

In closing this little volume I must again express the consciousness I entertain of the inadequacy of my efforts to deal with a subject that would require several volumes to do it justice.

If, however, I have succeded, in addition to

furnishing particulars of the lives of the most popular French composers, in drawing attention to the works of some who are less well-known than they deserve to be, my object will have been attained, and this little book will not have been written in vain.

APPENDIX

LIST OF THE PRINCIPAL WORKS COMPOSED BY AMBROISE THOMAS, GOUNOD, SAINT-SAËNS, MASSENET, REYER, AND BRUNEAU

AMBROISE THOMAS

DRAMATIC WORKS

1. "Le Double Échelle," opéra comique, 1 act. 1837.
2. "Le Perruquier de la Régence," op. com., 3 acts. 1838.
3. "La Gipsy," ballet, 2 acts. 1839.
   (In collaboration with Benoist.)
4. "Le Panier fleuri," op. com., 1 act. 1839.
5. "Carline," op., 3 acts. 1840.
6. "Le Comte de Carmagnole," op., 2 acts. 1841.
7. "Le Guerillero," op., 2 acts. 1842.
8. "Angélique et Médor," op. com., 1 act. 1843.
9. "Mina," op. com., 3 acts. 1843.
10. "Betty," ballet, 2 acts. 1846.

11. "Le Caïd," op. com., 3 acts. 1849.
12. "Le Songe d'une Nuit d'Été," op. com., 3 acts. 1850.
13. "Raymond," op., 3 acts. 1851.
14. "La Tonelli," op., 2 acts. 1853.
15. "La Cour de Célimène," op. com., 2 acts. 1855.
16. "Psyché," op., 3 acts. 1857.
17. "Le Carnaval de Venise," op. com., 3 acts. 1857.
18. "Le Roman d'Elvire," op. com., 3 acts. 1860.
19. "Mignon," op., 3 acts. 1866.
20. "Hamlet," op., 5 acts. 1868.
21. "Gille et Gillotin," op. com., 1 act. 1874.
22. "Françoise de Rimini," op., 5 acts. 1882.
23. "La Tempête," ballet. 1889.

SACRED WORKS

Requiem.
Messe Solennelle.
Marche Religieuse.
3 Motets.

MISCELLANEOUS WORKS

"Hommage à Boïeldieu," cantata.
"Souvenirs d'Italie," 6 romances, pour chant et piano.
Quintet for strings.
Quartet for strings, op. 1.
Trio for piano, violin, or violoncello.
"Fantaisie," for piano or orchestra.
"Fantaisie sur un air écossais," for piano.
"Six caprices pour piano."
"Deux nocturnes."

" Rondeaux pour piano à quatre mains."
Choruses for male voices.
&c. &c.

CHARLES GOUNOD

DRAMATIC WORKS

1. "Sapho," op., 3 acts. 1851.
2. "La Nonne sanglante," op., 5 acts. 1854.
3. "Le Médecin Malgré Lui," op. com., 3 acts. 1858.
4. "Faust," op., 5 acts. 1859.
5. "Philémon et Baucis," op. com., 2 acts. 1860. (Later enlarged to 3 acts.)
6. "La Colombe," op. com., 2 acts. 1860.
7. "La Reine de Saba," op., 5 acts. 1862.
8. "Mireille," op., 5 acts. 1864.
9. "Roméo et Juliette," op., 5 acts. 1867.
10. "Cinq Mars," op., 4 acts. 1877.
11. "Polyeucte," op., 5 acts. 1878.
12. "Le Tribut de Zamora," op., 4 acts. 1881.

"Georges Dandin," op. com. (unperformed).

SACRED WORKS

Several Masses, of which the best known is the "Messe de Ste. Cécile," 1855. Amongst the others may be mentioned the "Messe aux Orphéonistes," 1852; "Messe du Sacré Cœur," 1876; "Messe de

"Pâques," 1885, and "Messe à la Mémoire de Jeanne d'Arc," 1887.
"Tobie," oratorio. 1854.
"The Redemption." 1882.
"Mors et vita." 1885.
"Hymne à St. Augustin." 1885.
"De Profundis."
"Te Deum."

Also a quantity of motets, choruses, and other religious compositions.

VOCAL WORKS

"1er. Recueil de 20 Mélodies." (Includes the "Ave Maria" on the first prelude of Bach; "Venise," "Sérénade," "Le Vallon," "Chanson du Printemps," "Jésus de Nazareth," "Le Soir," etc.).
"2ème. Recueil de 20 Mélodies." (Includes "Marguerite," "Medjé," "Envoi de Fleurs," "Au Printemps," "Ce que je suis sans toi," etc.).
"3ême. Recueil de 20 Mélodies." (Includes "La Pâquerette," "Où voulez-vous aller?" "Le Ciel a visité la Terre," several extracts from operas, etc.).
"4ème. Recueil de 20 Mélodies." (Includes "Le Banc de Pierre," "Le Nom de Marie," several extracts from operas, etc.).
A volume of 15 duets.
The above are published by Messrs. Choudens.
During his sojourn in England Gounod composed a large number of songs, the best known of which are: "Maid of Athens," "The Fountain mingles

with the River," "Oh, that we two were Maying!" "The Worker," "There is a green Hill far away," and "Biondina," a collection of 20 songs to Italian words.

MISCELLANEOUS WORKS

Music to the tragedy "Ulysse." 1852.
Music to "Les deux Reines." 1872.
Music to "Jeanne d'Arc." 1873.
Symphony No. 1, in D. 1854.
Symphony No. 2, in E flat. 1855.
Funeral March of a Marionette.
Saltarello.
Pianoforte music, Marches, etc.

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS

DRAMATIC WORKS

1. "La Princesse Jaune," op. com., 1 act. 1872.
2. "Le Timbre d'Argent," op., 3 acts. 1877.
3. "Samson et Dalila," Biblical op., 3 acts. 1877.
4. "Etienne Marcel," op., 4 acts. 1879.
5. "Henri VIII," op., 4 acts. 1881.
6. "Proserpine," op., 3 acts. 1887.
7. "Ascanio," op., 5 acts. 1890.
10. "Phryné," op. com., 2 acts. 1893.

SACRED WORKS

Messe Solennelle, op. 4.
"Tantum ergo," chorus, op. 5.
"Oratorio de Noël," op. 12.
Psalm xviii., "Cœli enarrant," op. 42.
"Le Déluge," poème biblique, op. 45.
"Les Soldats de Gédéon," double chorus, op. 46.
Messe de Requiem, op. 54.

ORCHESTRAL WORKS

Symphony in E flat, No. 1, op. 2.
Symphony in A minor, No. 2, op. 55.
Symphony in C minor, No. 3, op. 78.
Overture, "Spartacus."
"Le Rouet d'Omphale," symphonic poem, op. 31.
"Phaëton," symphonic poem, op. 39.
"Danse Macabre," symphonic poem, op. 40.
"La jeunesse d'Hercule," symphonic poem, op. 50.
"Orient et Occident," march for military band, op. 25.
"Marche héroïque," op. 34.
Suite (Prelude, Sarabande, Gavotte, Romance, Final), op. 49.
"Suite Algérienne," op. 60.
"Une Nuit à Lisbonne," barcarolle, op. 63.
"La Jota Aragonese," op. 64.
"Sarabande et Rigaudon," op. 93.

CONCERTOS AND WORKS FOR A SOLO INSTRUMENT WITH ORCHESTRA.

Concerto for the piano in D, No. 1, op. 17.
Concerto for the piano in G minor, No. 2, op. 22.
Concerto for the piano in E flat, No. 3, op. 29.
Concerto for the piano in C minor, No. 4, op. 44.
Rhapsodie d'Auvergne, piano & orchestra, op. 73.
"Africa," fantasia, piano & orchestra, op. 89.
Introduction et Rondo Capriccioso, violin & orchestra, op. 28.
Concerto for violin, No. 1.
Concerto for violin in C, No. 2, op. 58.
Concerto for violin in B minor, No. 3, op. 61.
Romance in D flat for violin or flute, op. 37.
Romance in C for violin, op. 48.
"Morceau de Concert," for violin, op. 62.
"Havanaise," for violin, op. 83.
"Tarantelle," for flute & clarionet, op. 6.
Concerto for violoncello, op. 33.
"Allegro appassionato," for violoncello, op. 43.

CHAMBER MUSIC

Trio in F, piano, violin & violoncello, No. 1, op. 18.
Trio in E minor, piano, violin & violoncello, No. 2, op. 92.
Quartet in B flat, piano, violin, viola & violoncello, op. 41.
Septet for trumpet, two violins, viola, basso & piano, op. 65.

Suite for violoncello & piano, op. 16.
Sonata for violoncello & piano, op. 32.
Sonata in D minor, for violin & piano, op. 75.

PIANO MUSIC

Six Bagatelles, op. 3.
1ère Mazourka, G minor, op. 21.
Gavotte, C minor, op. 23.
2ème Mazourka, G minor, op. 24.
Six Études, op. 52.
Menuet et valse, op. 56.
3ème Mazourka, B minor, op. 66.
Album of six pieces, op. 72.
"Souvenir d'Italie," op. 80.
"Les Cloches du Soir," op. 85.
Valse Canariote, op. 88.
Suite, op. 90.
Variations on a theme of Beethoven, for two pianos, op. 35.
"Wedding-cake," "caprice-valse" for piano and strings, op. 76.
Polonaise for two pianos, op. 77.
"Feuillet d'Album," for piano duet, op. 81.
"Pas redoublé," piano duet, op. 86.
Scherzo for two pianos, op. 87.

MISCELLANEOUS WORKS

"La Lyre et la Harpe," ode, op. 57.
"Hymme à Victor Hugo," op. 69.
"La Fiancée du Timbalier," ballade, op. 82.
"Scène d'Horace," op. 10.

" 3 Rhapsodies sur des Cantiques Bretons," for organ, op. 7.
" Bénédiction nuptiale," for organ, op. 9.
" Elévation ou Communion," for organ, op. 13.
" Romance," for horn & piano, op. 36.
" Berceuse," for piano & violin, op. 38.
Romance for violoncello & piano, op. 51.
2 Choruses, words by Victor Hugo, op. 53.
2 Choruses, op. 68.
2 Choruses for men's voices, op. 71.
Saltarelle, chorus, op. 74.
" Caprice " on Danish melodies, for flute.
Oboe, clarionet, and piano, op. 79.
" Les Guerriers," chorus for men's voices, op. 84.
" Chant Saphique," for violoncello & piano, op. 91.
Music to " Antigone."

Also a number of piano transcriptions of Bach, Beethoven, &c. &c.

The large majority of the compositions of Saint-Saëns are published by Messrs A. Durand & Fils.

JULES MASSENET

DRAMATIC WORKS

1. " La Grand'tante," op. com., 1 act. 1867.
2. " Don César de Bazan," op. com., 3 acts. 1872.
3. " Le Roi de Lahore," op., 5 acts. 1877.
4. " Hérodiade," op. 1881.
5. " Manon," op., 4 acts. 1884.

6. "Le Cid," op., 4 acts. 1885.
7. "Esclarmonde," op. 1889.
8. "Le Mage," op., 5 acts. 1891.
9. "Werther," op. 1892.
10. "Le Carillon," ballet. 1892.
11. "Thaïs," op. (as yet unperformed).

SACRED WORKS

Requiem.
"Marie Magdeleine," drame sacré.
"Eve," mystère.
"La Vierge."

VOCAL WORKS

"Poème d'Avril."
"Poème d'Octobre."
"Poème pastoral."
"Poème du Souvenir."
"Poème d'Hiver."
"Chants intimes."
"Vingt Mélodies."
(These include "Elégie," "A Colombine," "Nuit d'Espagne," "Sérénade du Passant," &c.)
&c. &c.

MISCELLANEOUS WORKS

"Mlle. de Montpensier," cantata } early works.
"David Rizzio," cantata }
"Paix et Liberté," cantate officielle. 1867.
"Narcisse," idylle antique.
Music to Leconte de Lisle's tragedy, "Les Erinnyes."
Music to Victorien Sardou's piece, "Le Crocodile."

"Pompeia," four symphonic pieces for orchestra.
Concert Overture.
Overture to Racine's "Phèdre."
First Orchestral Suite.
Second ,, ,, "Scènes Hongroises."
Third ,, ,,
Fourth ,, ,, "Scènes Pittoresques."
Fifth ,, ,, "Scènes Dramatiques" (after Shakespeare).
Sixth ,, ,, "Scènes Alsaciennes."
Sarabande Espagnole, for small orchestra.
"Lamento" to the memory of Georges Bizet.
Introduction and variations for strings, flute, oboe, clarionet, horn and bassoon.
"Scènes de Bal," for piano.
Improvisations, for piano.
"Le Roman d'Arlequin," pantomime enfantine.
&c. &c. &c.

ERNEST REYER

PRINCIPAL WORKS

"Le Sélam," ode symphonique. 1850.
"Maître Wolfram," op., 1 act. 1854.
"Sacountala," ballet. 1858.
"La Statue," op. com., 3 acts. 1861.
"Erostrate," op., 2 acts. 1862.
"Sigurd," op., 4 acts. 1884
"Salammbô," op., 5 acts. 1890.

ALFRED BRUNEAU

DRAMATIC WORKS

"Kérim," opera, 3 acts. 1887.
"Le Rêve," lyrical drama, 4 acts. 1891.
"L'Attaque du Moulin," lyrical drama, 4 acts. 1893.

MISCELLANEOUS WORKS

Ouverture héroïque.
"Léda," poème antique.
"Penthésilée," poème symphonique.
"La Belle au Bois dormant," poème symphonique.
"Lieds de France," album of songs.

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